

WORKS
OF
OSSIAN
VOL. I.

FRANCFORT AND LEIPZIG
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A
DISSERTATION
CONCERNING THE
ANTIQUITY &c. OF THE POEMS
OF
OSSIAN the Son of FINGAL.

Inquiries into the antiquities of nations afford more pleasure than any real advantage to mankind. The ingenious may form systems of history on probabilities and a few facts; but at a great distance of time, their accounts must be vague and uncertain. The infancy of states and kingdoms is as destitute of great events, as of the means of transmitting them to posterity. The arts of polished life, by which alone facts can be preserved with certainty, are the production of a well-formed

community. It is then historians begin to write, and public transactions to be worthy remembrance. The actions of former times are left in obscurity, or magnified by uncertain traditions. Hence it is that we find so much of the marvellous in the origin of every nation; posterity being always ready to believe any thing, however fabulous, that reflects honour on their ancestors. The Greeks and Romans were remarkable for this weakness. They swallowed the most absurd fables concerning the high antiquities of their respective nations. Good historians, however, rose very early amongst them, and transmitted, with lustre, their great actions to posterity. It is to them that they owe that unrivalled fame they now enjoy, while the great actions of other nations are involved in fables, or lost in obscurity. The Celtic nations afford a striking instance of this kind. They, though once the masters of Europe from the mouth of the river Ob (*), in Russia, to Cape Finisterræ, the western point of Galicia in Spain, are very little mentioned in history. They trusted their fame to tradition and the songs of their bards, which, by the vicissitude of human affairs, are long since lost. Their ancient language is the only monument that remains of them;

(*) Plin. l. 6.

them; and the traces of it being found in places so widely distant from each other, serves only to shew the extent of their ancient power, but throws very little light on their history.

Of all the Celtic nations, that which possessed old Gaul is the most renowned; not perhaps on account of worth superior to the rest, but for their wars with a people, who had historians to transmit the fame of their enemies, as well as their own, to posterity. Britain was first peopled by them, according to the testimony of the best authors (*); its situation in respect to Gaul makes the opinion probable: but what puts it beyond all dispute, is that the same customs and language prevailed among the inhabitants of both in the days of Julius Cæsar (†).

The colony from Gaul possessed themselves, at first, of that part of Britain, which was next to their own country; and spreading northward, by degrees, as they increased in numbers, peopled the whole island. Some adventurers passing over from those parts of Britain, that

(a) 3 are

(*) Cæf. l. 5. Agric. l. I. c. 2.

(†) Cæsar, Pomp. Mela, Tacitus.

are within sight of Ireland, were the founders of the Irish nation: which is a more probable story, than the idle fables of Milesian and Gallician colonies. Diodorus Siculus (+) mentions it as a thing well known in his time, that the inhabitants of Ireland were originally Britons; and his testimony is unquestionable, when we consider, that, for many ages, the language and customs of both nations were the same.

Tacitus was of opinion, that the ancient Caledonians were of German extract. By the language and customs, which always prevailed in the North of Scotland, and which are undoubtedly Celtic, one would be tempted to differ in opinion from that celebrated writer. The Germans, properly so called, were not the same with the ancient Celtæ. The manners and customs of the two nations were similar; but their language different. The Germans (*) are the genuine descendants of the ancient Dacæ, afterwards well known by the name of Daci, and passed originally into Europe by the way of the northern countries, and settled beyond the Danube, towards the vast regions of Transilvania, Wallachia, and Molda-

(+) *Diod. Sic. l. 5.*

(*) *Strabo, l. 7.*

Moldavia; and from thence advanced by degrees into Germany. The Celtæ (†), it is certain, sent many colonies into that country, all of whom retained their own laws, language, and customs; and it is of them, if any colonies came from Germany into Scotland, that the ancient Caledonians were descended.

But whether the Caledonians were a colony of the Celtic Germans, or the same with the Gauls that first possessed themselves of Britain, is a matter of no moment at this distance of time. Whatever their origin was, we find them very numerous in the time of Julius Agricola, which is a presumption that they were long before settled in the country. The form of their government was a mixture of aristocracy and monarchy, as it was in all the countries where the Druids bore the chief sway. This order of men seems to have been formed on the same system with the Dactyli Idæi and Curetes of the ancients. Their pretended intercourse with heaven, their magic and divination were the same. The knowledge of the Druids in natural causes, and the properties of certain things, the fruit of the experiments of ages, gained them a mighty reputation among the people. The esteem of the populace soon increased into a

(a) 4 vene.

(†) *Cæs. l. 6. Liv. l. 3. Tac. de mor. Germ.*

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reverence for the order; which a cunning and ambitious tribe of men took care to improve, to such a degree, that they, in a manner, ingrossed the management of civil, as well as religious, matters. It is generally allowed that they did not abuse this extraordinary power; the preserving their character of sanctity was so essential to their influence, that they never broke out into violence or oppression. The chiefs were allowed to execute the laws, but the legislative power was entirely in the hands of the Druids (*). It was by their authority that the tribes were united, in times of the greatest danger, under one head. This temporary king, or Vergobretus (†), was chosen by them, and generally laid down his office at the end of the war. These priests enjoyed long this extraordinary privilege among the Celtic nations, who lay beyond the pale of the Roman empire. It was in the beginning of the second century, that their power among the Caledonians began to decline. The poems, that celebrate Trathal and Cormac, ancestors to Fingal, are full of particulars concerning the fall of the Druids, which account for the total silence concerning their religion, in the poems that are now given to the public.

The

(*) *Cas. l. 6.*

(†) *Fergubreth, the man to judge.*

The continual wars of the Caledonians against the Romans hindered the nobility from initiating themselves, as the custom formerly was, into the order of the Druids. The precepts of their religion were confined to a few, and were not much attended to by a people inured to war. The Vergobretus, or chief magistrate, was chosen without the concurrence of the hierarchy, or continued in his office against their will. Continual power strengthened his interest among the tribes, and enabled him to send down, as hereditary to his posterity, the office he had only received himself by election.

On occasion of a new war against the *King of the World*, as the poems emphatically call the Roman emperor, the Druids, to vindicate the honour of the order, began to resume their ancient privilege of choosing the Vergobretus. Garinal, the son of Tarno, being deputed by them, came to the grandfather of the celebrated Fingal, who was then Vergobretus, and commanded him, in the name of the whole order, to lay down his office. Upon his refusal, a civil war commenced, which soon ended in almost the total extinction of the religious order of the Druids. A few that remained, retired to the dark recesses of their groves, and the caves they had formerly used for their meditations. It is then

we find them in *the circle of stones*, and unheeded by the world. A total disregard for the order, and utter abhorrence of the Druidical rites ensued. Under this cloud of public hate, all that had any knowledge of the religion of the Druids, became extinct, and the nation fell into the last degree of ignorance of their rites and ceremonies.

It is no matter of wonder then, that Fingal and his son Ossian make so little, if any, mention of the Druids, who were the declared enemies to their succession in the supreme magistracy. It is a singular case, it must be allowed, that there are no traces of religion in the poems ascribed to Ossian; as the poetical compositions of other nations are so closely connected with their mythology. It is hard to account for it, to those who are not made acquainted with the manner of the old Scottish bards. That race of men carried their notions of martial honour to an extravagant pitch. Any aid given their heroes in battle, was thought to derogate from their fame; and the bards immediately transferred the glory of the action to him who had given that aid.

Had Ossian brought down gods, as often as Homer has done, to assist his heroes, this poem had not consist-

ed of eulogiums on his friends, but of hymns to these superior beings. To this day, those that write in the Galic language, seldom mention religion in their profane poetry; and when they professedly write of religion, they never interlard with their compositions, the actions of their heroes. This custom alone, even though the religion of the Druids had not been previously extinguished, may, in some measure, account for Ossian's silence concerning the religion of his own times.

To say, that a nation is void of all religion, is the same thing as to say, that it does not consist of people endued with reason. The traditions of their fathers, and their own observations on the works of nature, together with that superstition which is inherent in the human frame, have, in all ages, raised in the minds of men some idea of a superior being. — Hence it is, that in the darkest times, and amongst the most barbarous nations, the very populace themselves had some faint notion, at least, of a divinity. It would be doing injustice to Ossian, who upon no occasion shews a narrow mind, to think, that he had not opened his conceptions to that primitive and greatest of all truths. But let Ossian's religion be what it will, it is certain he had no knowledge of Christianity, as there is not the least

least allusion to it, or any of its rites, in his poems; which absolutely fixes him to an era prior to the introduction of that religion. The persecution begun by Diocletian, in the year 303, is the most probable time, in which the first dawning of Christianity in the north of Britain can be fixed. — The humane and mild character of Constantius Chlorus, who commanded then in Britain, induced the persecuted Christians, to take refuge under him. Some of them, through a zeal to propagate their tenets, or through fear, went beyond the pale of the Roman empire, and settled among the Caledonians; who were the more ready to hearken to their doctrines, as the religion of the Druids had been exploded so long before.

These missionaries, either through choice, or to give more weight to the doctrine they advanced, took possession of the cells and groves of the Druids; and it was from this retired life they had the name of *Culdees* (*), which in the language of the country signified *sequestered persons*. It was with one of the *Culdees*, that Ossian, in his extreme old age, is said to have disputed concerning the Christian religion. This dispute is still extant, and is couched in verse, according

(*) *Culdich*.

ing to the custom of the times. The extreme ignorance on the part of Ossian, of the Christian tenets, shews, that that religion had only been lately introduced; as it is not easy to conceive, how one of the first rank could be totally unacquainted with a religion, that had been known for any time in the country. The dispute bears the genuine marks of antiquity. The obsolete phrases and expressions peculiar to the times, prove it to be no forgery. If Ossian then lived at the introduction of Christianity, as by all appearance he did, his epoch will be the latter end of the third, and beginning of the fourth century. What puts this point beyond dispute, is the allusion in his poems to the history of the times.

The exploits of Fingal against Caracul (*), the son of the *King of the World*, are among the first brave actions of his youth. A complete poem, which relates to this subject, is printed in this collection.

In the year 210 the emperor Severus, after returning from his expeditions against the Caledonians, at York fell into the tedious illness, of which he afterwards died.

(*) Carac'huil, terrible eye. Carac'hella, terrible look. Carac-challamb, a sort of upper garment.

died. The Caledonians and Maia^{tæ}, resuming courage from his indisposition, took arms, in order to recover the possessions they had lost. The enraged emperor commanded his army to march into their country, and to destroy it with fire and sword. His orders were but ill executed, for his son, Caracalla, was at the head of the army, and his thoughts were entirely taken up with the hopes of his father's death, and with schemes to supplant his brother Geta. — He scarcely had entered the enemy's country, when news was brought him, that Severus was dead. — A sudden peace is patched up with the Caledonians, and, as it appears from Dion Cassius, the country, they had lost to Severus, was restored to them.

The Caracul of Fingal is no other than Caracalla, who, as the son of Severus, the Emperor of Rome, whose dominions were extended almost over the known world, was not without reason called, in the poems of Ossian, *the Son of the King of the World*. The space of time between 211, the year Severus died, and the beginning of the fourth century, is not so great, but Ossian the son of Fingal, might have seen the Christians, whom the persecution under Diocletian had driven beyond the pale of the Roman empire.

Ossian,

Offian, in one of his many lamentations on the death of his beloved son Oscar, mentions among his great actions, a battle which he fought against Caros, king of Ships, on the banks of the winding Carun (*). It is more than probable, that the Caros mentioned here, is the same with the noted usurper Carausius, who assumed the purple in the year 287, and seizing on Britain, defeated the emperor Maximian Herculus, in several naval engagements, which gives propriety to his being called, in Offian's poems, *the King of Ships*. The *winding Carun* is that small river retaining still the name of Caron, and runs in the neighbourhood of Agricola's wall, which Carausius repaired to obstruct the incursions of the Caledonians. Several other passages in the poems allude to the wars of the Romans; but the two just mentioned clearly; and this account agrees exactly with the Irish histories, which place the death of Fingal, the son of Comhal, in the year 283, and that of Oscar and their own celebrated Cairbre, in the year 269.

Some people may imagine, that the allusions to the Roman history might have been industriously inserted into the poems, to give them the appearance of antiquity. This fraud must then have been committed at least
three

(*) *Car-avon, Winding river.*

three ages ago, as the passages, in which the allusions are made, are alluded to often in the compositions of those times.

Every one knows, what a cloud of ignorance and barbarism overspread the north of Europe three hundred years ago. The minds of men, addicted to superstition, contracted a narrowness that destroyed genius. Accordingly we find the compositions of those times trivial and puerile to the last degree. But let it be allowed, that, amidst all the untoward circumstances of the age, a genius might arise, it is not easy to determine, what could induce him to give the honour of his compositions to an age so remote. We find no fact, that he has advanced, to favour any designs which could be entertained by any man who lived in the fifteenth century. But should we suppose, a poet, through humour, or for reasons which cannot be seen at this distance of time, would ascribe his own compositions to Ossian, it is next to impossible, that he could impose upon his countrymen, when all of them were so well acquainted with the traditional poems of their ancestors.

The strongest objection to the authenticity of the poems now given to the public under the name of Ossian, is the improbability of their being handed down
by

by tradition through so many centuries. Ages of barbarism, some will say, could not produce poems abounding with the disinterested and generous sentiments too conspicuous in the compositions of Ossian; and could these ages produce them, it is impossible but they must be lost, or altogether corrupted in a long succession of barbarous generations.

These objections naturally suggest themselves to men unacquainted with the ancient state of the northern parts of Britain. The bards, who were an inferior order of the Druids, did not share their bad fortune. They were spared by the victorious king, as it was through their means only he could hope for immortality to his fame. They attended him in the camp, and contributed to establish his power by their songs. His great actions were magnified; and the populace, who had no ability to examine into his character narrowly, were dazzled with his fame in the rhimes of the bards. In the mean time, men assumed sentiments, that are rarely to be met with in an age of barbarism. The bards who were originally the disciples of the Druids, had their minds opened, and their ideas enlarged, by being initiated in the learning of that celebrated order. They could form a perfect hero in their own minds, and ascribe that character

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rafter to their prince. The inferior chiefs made this ideal character the model of their conduct, and by degrees brought their minds to that generous spirit, which breathes in all the poetry of the times. The prince, flattered by his bards, and rivalled by his own heroes, who imitated his character as described in the eulogies of his poets, endeavoured to excel his people in merit, as he was above them in station. This emulation continuing, formed at last the general character of the nation, happily compounded of what is noble in barbarity, and virtuous and generous in a polished people.

When virtue in peace, and bravery in war are the characteristics of a nation, their actions become interesting, and their fame worthy of immortality. A generous spirit is warmed with noble actions, and becomes ambitious of perpetuating them. This is the true source of that divine inspiration, to which the poets of all ages pretended. When they found their themes inadequate to the warmth of their imaginations, they varnished them over with fables, supplied by their own fancy, or furnished by absurd traditions. These fables, however ridiculous, had their abettors; posterity either implicitly believed them, or through a vanity, natural to mankind, pretended that they did. They lov-

ed to place the founders of their families in the days of fable, when poetry, without the fear of contradiction, could give what characters she pleased of her heroes. It is to this vanity that we owe the preservation of what remains of the works of Ossian. His poetical merit made his heroes famous in a country, where heroism was much esteemed and admired. The posterity of these heroes, or those who pretended to be descended from them, heard with pleasure the eulogiums of their ancestors; bards were employed to repeat the poems, and to record the connexion of their patrons with chiefs so renowned. Every chief in process of time had a bard in his family; and the office became at last hereditary. By the succession of these bards, the poems concerning the ancestors of the family were handed down from generation to generation; they were repeated to the whole clan on solemn occasions, and always alluded to in the new compositions of the bards. This custom came down near to our own times; and after the bards were discontinued, a great number in a clan retained by memory, or committed to writing, their compositions; and founded the antiquity of their families on the authority of their poems.

The use of letters was not known in the north of Europe, till long after the institution of the bards. the

records of the families of their patrons, their own, and more ancient poems were handed down by tradition. Their poetical compositions were admirably contrived for that purpose. They were adapted to music; and the most perfect harmony was observed. Each verse was so connected with those which preceded or followed it, that, if one line had been remembered in a stanza, it was almost impossible to forget the rest. The cadences followed in so natural a gradation, and the words were so adapted to the common turn of the voice, after it is raised to a certain key, that it was almost impossible, from a similarity of sound, to substitute one word for another. This excellence is peculiar to the Celtic tongue, and is perhaps to be met with in no other language. Nor does this choice of words clog the sense or weaken the expression. The numerous flexions of consonants, and variation in declension, make the language very copious.

The descendants of the Celæ, who inhabited Britain and its isles, were not singular in this method of preserving the most precious monuments of their nation. The ancient laws of the Greeks were couched in verse, and handed down by tradition. The Spartans, through a long habit, became so fond of this custom, that they would

would never allow their laws to be committed to writing. The actions of great men, and the eulogiums of kings and heroes, were preserved in the same manner. All the historical monuments of the old Germans were comprehended in their ancient songs (*); which were either hymns to their gods, or elegies in praise of their heroes, and were intended to perpetuate the great events in their nation, which were carefully interwoven with them. This species of composition was not committed to writing, but delivered by oral tradition (†). The care they took to have the poems taught to their children, the uninterrupted custom of repeating them upon certain occasions, and the happy measure of the verse, served to preserve them for a long time uncorrupted. This oral chronicle of the Germans was not forgot in the eighth century, and it probably would have remained to this day, had not learning, which thinks every thing, that is not committed to writing, fabulous, been introduced. It was from poetical traditions that Garcilasso composed his account of the Yncas of Peru. The Peruvians had lost all other monuments of their history, and it was from ancient poems, which his mother, a prin-

(b) 3

cess

(*) Tacitus de mor. Germ.

(†) Abbé de la Bletterie, Remarques sur la Germanie.

cess of the blood of the Yncas, taught him in his youth, that he collected the materials of his history. If other nations then, that had been often overrun by enemies, and had sent abroad and received colonies, could, for many ages, preserve, by oral tradition, their laws and histories uncorrupted: it is much more probable, that the ancient Scots, a people so free of intermixture with foreigners, and so strongly attached to the memory of their ancestors, had the works of their bards handed down with great purity.

It will seem strange to some, that poems, admired for many centuries in one part of this kingdom, should be hitherto unknown in the other; and that the British, who have carefully traced out the works of genius in other nations, should so long remain strangers to their own. This, in a great measure, is to be imputed to those who understood both languages and never attempted a translation. They, from being acquainted but with detached pieces, or from a modesty, which perhaps the present translator ought, in prudence, to have followed, despaired of making the compositions of their bards agreeable to an English reader. The manner of those compositions is so different from other poems, and the ideas so confined to the most early state of so-

ciety, that it was thought they had not enough of variety to please a polished age.

This was long the opinion of the translator of the following collection; and though he admired the poems, in the original, very early, and gathered part of them from tradition, for his own amusement, yet he never had the smallest hopes of seeing them in an English dress. He was sensible, that the strength and manner of both languages were very different, and that it was next to impossible to translate the Galic poetry into any thing of tolerable English verse; a prose translation he could never think of, as it must necessarily fall short of the majesty of an original.

It is therefore highly probable, that the compositions of Ossian would have still remained in the obscurity of a lost language, had not a gentleman, who has himself made a figure in the poetical world, insisted with the present editor, for a literal prose translation of some detached piece. He approved of the specimen, and, through him, copies came to the hands of several people of taste in Scotland.

Frequent transcription, and the corrections of those, who thought they mended the poems by modernizing the

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ideas, corrupted them to such a degree, that the translator was induced to hearken to the solicitations of a gentleman deservedly esteemed in Scotland, for his taste and knowledge in polite literature, and published the genuine copies under the title of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*. The fragments, upon their first appearance, were so much approved of, that several people of rank, as well as taste, prevailed with the translator to make a journey to the Highlands and western isles, in order to recover what remained of the works of Ossian the son of Fingal, the best, as well as most ancient of those who are celebrated in tradition for their poetical genius. A detail of this journey would be both tedious and unentertaining; let it suffice therefore, that, after a peregrination of six months, the translator collected from tradition, and some manuscripts, all the poems in the following collection, and some more still in his hands, though rendered less complete by the ravages of time.

The action of the poem that stands the first, was not the greatest or most celebrated of the exploits of Fingal. His wars were very numerous, and each of them afforded a theme which employed the genius of his son. But, excepting the present poem, those pieces are in a great measure lost, and there only remain a
few

few fragments of them in the hands of the translator. Tradition has still preserved, in many places, the story of the poems, and many now living have heard them in their youth, repeated.

The complete work, now printed, would, in a short time, have shared the fate of the rest. The genius of the highlanders has suffered a great change within these few years. The communication with the rest of the island is open, and the introduction of trade and manufactures has destroyed that leisure, which was formerly dedicated to hearing and repeating the poems of ancient times. Many have now learned to leave their mountains, and seek their fortunes in a milder climate; and though a certain *amor patriæ* may sometimes bring them back, they have, during their absence, imbibed enough of foreign manners, to despise the customs of their ancestors. Bards have been long disused, and the spirit of genealogy has greatly subsided. Men begin to be less devoted to their chiefs, and consanguinity is not so much regarded. When property is established, the human mind confines its views to the pleasure it procures. It does not go back to antiquity, or look forward to succeeding ages. The cares of life increase, and the actions of other times no longer amuse. Hence it is,

that the taste for their ancient poetry is at a low ebb among the highlanders. They have not, however, thrown off the good qualities of their ancestors. Hospitality still subsists, and an uncommon civility to strangers. Friendship is inviolable, and revenge less blindly followed than formerly.

To speak of the poetical merit of the poems, would be an anticipation on the judgment of the public: And all that can be said of the translation, is, that it is literal, and that simplicity is studied. The arrangement of the words in the original is imitated, and the inversions of the style observed. As the translator claims no merit from his version, he hopes for the indulgence of the public, where he fails. He wishes, that the imperfect semblance he draws, may not prejudice the world against an original, which contains what is beautiful in simplicity, and grand in the sublime,

A N
A N S W E R

T O

Mr. Shaw's Inquiry

INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE
POEMS ascribed to OSSIAN.

By JOHN CLARK,

TRANSLATOR OF THE CALEDONIAN BARDS, AND MEMBER
OF THE SOCIETY OF SCOTS ANTIQUARIES.

Impudens, impurus, invertecondissimus. PLAUT.

Printed after the Original,

EDINBURGH 1781.

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By JOHN CLARK.

EDITION OF THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD
VOLUMES, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

5 N059

Printed at the Edinburgh Press.

EDINBURGH: 1807.

ADVICE

TO THE

R E A D E R.

The Authenticity of Ossian's Poems, and even the Excellency of ancient Irish or Highland - Poetry, having been contested, ever since their first appearance in the Public: the Editor of this second German Edition of Ossian's Works, to the preceeding Disfertation of the Translator has joined the latest Apology of a learned Highlander; who has best defended that noble cause against the mockery of a miserable Highlander, whose treason has been so much boasted by those, who would envy to the noble ancient Nation even that prerogative of being the mother of the most excellent Northern Poet.

A N S W E R

T O

MR. SHAW'S INQUIRY.

MR. WILLIAM SHAW, author of the "In-
"quiry into the Authenticity of the
"Poems ascribed to Ossian," is a native of the
isle of Arran, where a dialect of the Gaelic
tongue is used, so corrupt in the words, and
so vicious in the pronunciation, as to be almost
unintelligible in the other Western Islands and
opposite continent of the Highlands, where the
language is spoken with elegance and purity.
Having obtained the common education given
to persons intended for being ministers of the
church of Scotland, he was admitted a clergy-
man in that church; and because he had no
immediate chance of a living in it, he went to
London, where he was employed for some ti-
me by a merchant, a native of Scotland, in
the tuition of his children. During the time
Mr. Shaw was thus employed, he turned his
thoughts

thoughts to the making some figure in Gaelic literature, as the means of recommending himself to the patronage of some of his countrymen, who had ecclesiastical preferments in the Highlands to bestow. He accordingly published proposals for printing by subscription a Grammar of the Gaelic language; and, through the support of some gentlemen, natives of the Highlands, resident in London, obtained a considerable number of subscribers. This circumstance encouraged him to propose to write a Dictionary of the Gaelic; a work much wanted, and desired, by the admirers of that ancient tongue.

But when the grammar, written by Mr. Shaw, made its appearance in public, it was soon perceived, that, from his ignorance in the first principles of the language, nothing was to be expected from a dictionary composed by such unskilful hands. His Highland patrons in London became, therefore, indifferent about the proposed work, and the subscription for the dictionary went on very languidly and coldly. Mr. Shaw, however, having left the service, in which he was employed in England, resolved to make a tour through the Highlands of Scotland, to obtain subscribers. Unluckily for his project

project, the *reputation* of his grammar had run before his application for patronage to his dictionary; and the former was by no means calculated to procure encouragement to the latter. Besides, the manners of the man were not such, as were requisite to gain the friendship or esteem of those to whom he applied; he therefore met with very little success in his journey. His professed design to rescue, what he called *the dying language of his country*, recommended him, however, to a nobleman in the North, so far as to obtain from him the presentation to a living in the Highlands, of about 50 l. yearly value.

Mr. Shaw having entered on the functions of his ministry, soon found that he was by no means agreeable to his parishioners. His forward manner, and uncouth address, gave disgust to many; whilst the provinciality of his dialect rendered his discourses almost unintelligible to all. Under such circumstances, it is natural to suppose, he soon became tired of his new preferment; and he returned to London, where he resumed the plan of his dictionary, which he had in a manner laid aside, on account of the very little encouragement, he received for the
pro-

prosecution of his design. He applied to the Highland-Society in London, for their support; which they collectively refused, both from their opinion of Mr. Shaw's want of abilities and knowledge for such a work, and that some gentlemen of talents in Scotland had undertaken to write a dictionary of the Gaelic, that would merit, in every way, their patronage. Some individuals, however, gave their names to Mr. Shaw, which enabled him to print a book, which he called a *Galic dictionary*.

When the book, under the name of the *Galic dictionary*, was published, it evidently appeared, that the distrust, generally entertained of Mr. Shaw's abilities and knowledge, was perfectly well-founded. Instead of adhering to the dialect spoken in the Highlands of Scotland, he had thrown into his work all the words he could collect from vocabularies of the different dialects of the Celtic, particularly that which is used in Ireland. To give an appearance of novelty to his book, he seems to have coined many words, to be met with in no dialect whatsoever of any language either ancient or modern. Upon the whole, there perhaps never appeared a work so unworthy of, or so unlike,

its title; for there are whole pages of Mr. Shaw's dictionary, which do not contain three words anywise similar to the Scotch Gaelic. The imposition, in short, was so glaring and impudent, that the author fell at once under the contempt and ridicule of every man conversant in the Gaelic, who was at the trouble of examining his book.

Disappointment and resentment operated very powerfully on Mr. Shaw's mind. His hopes of patronage in Scotland had been extinguished. He had quarrelled with his parishioners; and a living of fifty pounds a-year was not sufficient to gratify his ambition and pride. He therefore resolved to quit the church of Scotland entirely, and to take orders in that of England. As he had failed in his attempt to flatter Scotch *vanity*, he resolved to convert English *prejudice* to his own advantage, by *unsaying* and *unwriting*, what he had *said* and *written* in favour of the ancient poetry and language of his native country.

The colouring of the above picture of Mr. Shaw is neither overcharged, nor are the featu-

res

res of his conduct misrepresented; as is well known to many hundreds of persons of credit, both in England and in Scotland. Without such a detail of facts, it would be difficult to explain to the reader, what motives could induce a man to deviate, as much as Mr. Shaw will appear to have done, not only from truth, but from his own former written, printed, and published declarations. The fact is, that he himself had the folly to declare to several persons, That, as there was no sale for Gaelic literature, he would write something against that literature, which he was certain would sell; and that so he would receive from the prejudices of the English, what the generosity of his countrymen the Scotch had denied. This circumstance, joined to the vanity of being patronised by Dr. Johnson, whose inveteracy to the translator of Ossian's poems is unconquerable, led our *worthy clergyman* astray from the direct track of truth, to the devious paths of malignant fiction and unauthorised romance.

Having premised these facts, I shall now proceed to the investigation and detection of the various falsehoods, scattered up and down through Mr. Shaw's pamphlet. In almost every

page, he gives us a piece of intelligence, which might have been delivered once for all, viz. That Mr. Macpherson had imposed upon the public, by giving his own compositions in English as translations from the Gaelic language: — That the Highlanders of every denomination endeavoured to support the imposition: — That the principal men of character and learning in the Highlands had signed their names to a falsehood, and got Dr. *Blair* to write in defence of it: and — That every Scotchman loves his country better than truth.

In place of taking up the reader's time with an ostentatious display of argument, or a critical minuteness in tracing out the contradictions in this pamphlet, concerning the translations from the Gaelic published by Mr. Macpherson; I shall simply narrate, what consists with my own personal knowledge on this subject.

The epic poems of *Fingal* and *Temora* I have never heard rehearsed by any single Highlander, in the same arrangement, in which Mr. Macpherson has published them. By different persons I have frequently heard almost every passa-

passage in these two poems, with no more difference from the translation, than what the genius of the language required; and not near so much, as there is between the different editions of these poems in the different parts of the Highlands. This variation was well accounted for by Mr. Shaw himself, before he thought it his interest to disguise the truth.

The Highlanders, who rehearse these poems at present, divide them into as many different pieces, as Mr. Macpherson has divided them into books. As his search after ancient poetry has been many years prior to mine, he might have found persons, who could rehearse more of these two poems, than I have: or, whether he has found manuscripts containing them, or introduced the episodes from different pieces of Gaelic composition, I shall not pretend to say. But this I can aver, that they are familiar to the Highlanders, although not in the direct arrangement, in which he has placed them. He might, however, have collected them from different persons, and exercised his own judgment afterwards in joining them, without being either branded with the appellation of a forger himself, or those, who gave their testimony to

what they knew to be true, stigmatized with collusion and imposture.

From these circumstances, however, our inquirer has taken the liberty of drawing very unwarrantable inferences. Although he uniformly pronounces every paragraph, not only of Mr. Macpherson, but of every other translator from the Gaelic, to be an imposition: yet the poems of Fingal and Temora are those, which he seems particularly to strike at. Mr. Shaw says, "Many were the thorough sceptics, as to the poems of Fingal and Temora," p. 2. "Ossian, who was a real character, although not the author of Mr. Macpherson's Fingal and Temora," p. 61. "Were I to call upon him (Mr. Smith) to produce the Gaelic of any forty lines, in either Fingal or Temora, he could not produce them," p. 42.

The variation, we have spoken of, in the arrangement of these two poems, is all the foundation, Mr. Shaw had for the present publication. How far it can operate towards a total annihilation of the Gaelic poetry now existing in the Highlands, shall be left to the public to determine.

Had

Had our author attacked Mr. Macpherson in a proper manner, and where he was really liable to some degree of censure, he would have met with my most hearty concurrence. Had he informed the public of what he has often acknowledged to me in private, that the translator of Ossian has really curtailed and left out a great part of those poems, which he has introduced as episodes: he would then have spoken the language of an honest man, and ascertained, what he well knows himself, and a thousand others can prove. The Maid of Creca, for example, an episode in Fingal, in my possession, is a large complete poem of itself, and extends to some hundred lines, all which are omitted in the translation.

So much did Mr. Shaw lament the curtailing of these poems, that he pressed me to print proposals for a general collection of them as well as of others, and to arrange the whole, simply as they are rehearsed by the people, without making them up into epic pieces; which accordingly I did. The originals and translations were to have been published in separate volumes. Mr. Shaw himself, with the greatest enthusiasm, voluntarily undertook to procure

subscribers for me in England; and wrote me several letters on that subject from London, assuring me, in the most positive manner, of his success. But instead of performing what he had thus spontaneously undertaken, the very next part of his conduct towards me was, to hold me forth as an impostor in his pamphlet; in which character I soon saw myself attempted to be exposed in the periodical papers of England.

The reader, *who does not know me*, may possibly suspect my word. But, if he will take the trouble to demand them, he may see in my possession, the original letters of Mr. Shaw, in his own hand-writing, addressed to me, on this subject.

The next thing which offers itself to our consideration, is *manuscripts*. "Why not produce and publish the manuscripts?" is the constant cry through every page: — yet, if the whole were produced, and published, our author gives us to understand, he would consider them only as translations from the English.

When I produce the originals, in my own hand-writing, taken down from the mouths of
illite.

illiterate countrymen, who rehearse them: Mr. Shaw answers, that I have translated them from the English, and read them to those persons, until they have learned to repeat poems of great length, and without one word of variation. When these persons offer to swear, that they could repeat those poems, twenty years before I was born: Mr. Shaw replies, that they are *Scotchmen*, and that their oaths deserve no regard: — “for a respectable minister (p. 81.) offers to produce as many witnesses as Mr. Shaw pleases, to swear to a falsehood, *knowing it to be such;*” and “another gentleman (p. 87.) offers to swear to a falsehood.” If I send to an hundred persons, in the most remote corners of the isles, who have never been within an hundred miles of me, and they rehearse these poems, to any person appointed to hear them: Mr. Shaw will say, that there has been a collusion, and that no Scotchman, except *himself*, can be believed.

Our Inquirer, however, has fixed upon one thing, which, he says, will satisfy him effectually: — If we will produce the originals, in Ossian’s own hand-writing, “with proper vouchers that there is no collusion,” he

will condescend to be converted. "How comes "it (says he), that neither Ossian himself, nor "any contemporary bard, has reduced them to "writing?" p. 61. What answer does the reader imagine I should give to a man, who demands originals in the hand-writing of one who never heard of letters! He would certainly think me highly reprehensible, did I honour these demands with any further notice than a contemptuous silence.

Although the evidence of every Highlander now living (our author alone excepted) is thus laid aside, and every Scotchman rejected as an exceptionable witness: I was particularly anxious to see, what method he would fall upon, to discredit the authenticity of the old Gaelic manuscripts containing some of those poems. Our ancestors surely could not anticipate the present controversy, five or six centuries ago: — no collusion could, therefore, have been expected among them. This, however, he has endeavoured to effect by a bold stroke, unmatched in any other writer; and with a mode of reasoning, as absurd, as it is weak, impudent, and fallacious.

It is perhaps necessary to inform the reader, that *Earse* is a name for our language, totally un-

unknown to us Highlanders, till we come abroad, and learn it from the natives of the Low Country, who apply it to our Gaelic, in contradistinction to the dialect of the same language spoken in Ireland. The language of the Highlanders and Irish, the characters they use, and their mode of contraction in writing, are, in a great measure, the same, and known to both by no other name than *Gaelic*. In our Inquirer's two first publications, his Analysis and Dictionary, the word *Earse* is not to be found: but in the pamphlet now under consideration, it is introduced about fifty times, and the Gaelic of Scotland is never wrote by any other name. There is a feeble, but impudent and disingenuous attempt at policy here, which the mere English reader cannot easily detect.

I will take advantage, says Mr. Shaw, of the term *Earse*, which prevails in the Low Country, for the Gaelic, and divide that language into two; — the one I will call *Irish*, and the other *Earse*. All the old manuscripts, that are to be found in the Highlands, I will call *Irish*; since the language, character, and contractions, are; in a great measure, the same. — I will maintain, that they contain
not

not the Scotch, but the Irish poetry and genealogies. I will then challenge the Highlanders to produce their *Earse* manuscripts; and as no such language ever existed, except in the imagination of the inhabitants of the Low Country, this will embarrass the reader, and wrap the subject in a cloud, which cannot easily be dispelled. Hence our author proceeds, "the manuscripts in the possession of Mr. M'Intyre of Glenacha, Argyleshire, are written in the *Irish* character, dialect, and contractions," p. 59. "The old Gaelic manuscripts in the possession of John Mackenzie, Esq. secretary to the Highland-Society of London, are said to be on the subject of Irish and Highland genealogies, and written in the *Irish* dialect and character," p. 84. There certainly never was a higher insult offered to the judgment of mankind. Will Mr. Shaw presume to say, that the Irish and Highlanders ever had a *different* language, character, or contractions? Until he has effrontery enough to make such a declaration in public, the reader will not surely hesitate to apply to this Inquirer after *truth*, the appellation, which he bestows on every Scotchman, *that he writes with an illiberal intention to deceive.*

To

To prove beyond the power of contradiction, the disingenuity as well as the gross ignorance of Mr. Shaw, on a subject which he pretends to understand better than any man living, I will lay before the reader the following facts. Mr. Mackenzie has authorised me to say, "That Mr. Shaw had seen the manuscripts in his custody before the publication of his pamphlet, had looked at them, and turned over the leaves; but at that time had read only a few words up and down in different places, but not one complete sentence, though requested so to do by Mr. Mackenzie at that time. That since the publication of his pamphlet, Mr. Shaw has again seen those manuscripts, and again read single words in different parts: but upon being pressed by Mr. Mackenzie, in presence of another gentleman, to try to read a few sentences, he applied himself to one page of a manuscript in verse; and after poring about a quarter of an hour, he made out three lines, which related, as read aloud by Mr. Shaw himself, to Oscar the son of Ossian. Upon being asked, how these lines agreed with the doctrine of his pamphlet? Mr. Shaw answered, That he believed, they were the composition of the fifteenth century, and not of Ossian."

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The disingenuity of Mr. Shaw is as obvious, as it is unpardonable. The manuscripts left in the possession of Mr. Mackenzie, were not placed in his hands, as containing any of the originals of Ossian's poems. They were only intended to prove, that Mr. M'Nicol had shown to the public, that there still exist Gaelic manuscripts written many centuries ago, in contradiction to Dr. Johnson, who precipitately averred, that there is not a manuscript in the Highlands a hundred years old. *Vide M'Nicol's Remarks on Dr. Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides, p. 303, et seq.*

We have seen above, that his ignorance of the Gaelic is such, that he does not know what these manuscripts contain. I do not choose to follow the example of our Inquirer, by holding forth names to the public. But I am at present possessed of letters, which I am ready to show, written by a gentleman of Ireland, who is no *native* of Scotland, and who, I believe, never was there, lamenting that Mr. Shaw could not make use of the valuable materials, put into his hands, in Dublin, to enable him to write his Gaelic Dictionary, because *he could not read one line of the Celtic character.* This gentleman

man is at present universally acknowledged to be in the first rank of Celtic literati; and his name would be sufficient to establish whatever he asserted, were I at liberty to make use of it: This I must decline, because it is too respectable to be written on the same page with that of Mr. Shaw.

In p. 59. he says, that he is the only Scotchman, who can decypher old manuscripts; and the reason assigned is, that he learned it in Ireland. I resided there as many years, as Mr. Shaw has done weeks; and yet I have seen many in Scotland, who can decypher them much better than I can. Mr. Shaw's words are these, "I believe, I may say it *without vanity*, I understand the language (Celtic) as well as any man living," p. 43. The same high strain of encomium is repeatedly pronounced on his own superior knowledge; — yet the truth at last comes out, and he acknowledges his ignorance. Says he, "I rumaged Trinity-college, had different persons in pay, who understood the characters and contractions," &c. p. 60. Very mortifying! to be obliged to hire persons for information in a language, of which he had written a Grammar and a Dictionary, and which

(a few pages back) he himself knew as well as any man living! But it is an old observation, that a *certain* class of men require long memories.

Before we finish the subject of manuscripts, it is necessary to take notice of a passage, which Mr. Shaw has quoted from Dr. Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides: "The editor has been heard "to say, that part of the poem has been received by him in the Saxon character. He "has then found, by some peculiar fortune, an "unwritten language, written in a character, "which the natives probably never beheld."

Here Dr. Johnson betrays ignorance, incompatible with his high pretensions to letters. There is not a man in Great Britain or Ireland, at all conversant with old manuscripts, but knows, that the Saxons, Highlanders, and Irish, wrote their different languages in the self-same character. Whether the Irish and Highlanders had them originally from the Saxons, or the Saxons from them, is a matter of no moment. They are undoubtedly the same; and came originally from the Romans, who were certainly the introducers of letters into Great Britain; from

from which they were transplanted, with the Christian religion, into Ireland. St. Patrick, who was a Scotchman, is said to have been the first who introduced letters into Ireland; and if that was the case, it is probable, that the Irish, Scotch, and Saxons, received the Roman letters through the hands of the ancient Britons.

Mr. Shaw exclaims, "I have the honour to mention the immortal Dr. Johnson as my friend." Had the respect, which, throughout his pamphlet, he affects to pay the Doctor, been sincere, he would not, surely, have thus introduced him, to make him ridiculous. Mr. Shaw knew very well, that the Doctor had written without book in the above passage. But, in place of throwing a veil over the Doctor's weakness, he brings him forward in a manner, at which Mr. Shaw himself could not help laughing; and leaves it in the power of one, born after he had written volumes, to tell him, that he is neither immortal nor infallible.

I trust, it has now appeared, that Mr. Shaw has imposed upon the public in his representation of the Gaelic manuscripts and poetry. But as the ancient, and even modern, state of

the Highlands is not generally understood, I shall endeavour to lay a short sketch of it before the reader, from which he will easily see, how our ancient poems came to be preserved.

When St. Columba, in the sixth century, gathered the monks into monasteries, the Gaelic was the only language of Scotland and Ireland; and Roman learning began to be cultivated in those monasteries. As there was a constant intercourse between the inhabitants of both islands, as the descendants of one common parent; and as their language was materially the same: it was reduced to writing in the same character, and on the same grammatical principles, by both. The policy of the clergy induced them to confine all learning to their own order; by which means they not only kept the vulgar in awe, with greater ease, but often arrived at the most eminent civil offices in the state. As the genius of Christianity did not, like that of Druidism, admit of a junction between the bards and the clergy, the former were prevented from partaking of the advantages arising from the cultivation of letters. The poetic trade, however, continued not only honourable, but lucrative. As books were unknown to the people, the

the songs of the bards became the only amusement of their leisure hours. The authors were caressed, honoured, and rewarded, by a people enthusiastically fond of the memory of their forefathers. As the mind was not stored with any other subject of contemplation except these poems, they were learned with a degree of quickness, and preserved with a purity, which, to persons accustomed to the use of books, is not easily conceivable. His bard was to the ancient chief, what a library is to the modern one. Public academies were instituted for the study of the poetic art; and it is not to be imagined, that candidates would be wanting for such an employment. When the pious Christian went on a pilgrimage to the tomb of his favourite saint, the bard, with equal enthusiasm, travelled to the habitation of his favourite poet, to learn his compositions. When the compositions of one country had been acquired, those of another were sought after; Ireland and Scotland were alternately visited by the bards of each nation.

Although literature was thus neglected by the bards, it was industriously cultivated by the clergy of the Highlands and Isles, before the

Reformation. But the art of printing was unhappily little practised in our country before that period; and the manuscripts (a few excepted) shared the fate of the monasteries, which perished by the enthusiastic zeal of the times.

The modern state of the *Highlands* presents a view somewhat different, which easily accounts for the neglect of Celtic literature of late.

The people of fortune send their *children*, when very young, to the Low Country, to be educated; who, as the Gaelic language is utterly unknown at the universities, have not an opportunity of learning it with other branches of education. The ends in view, and the means used, are the same with those of the natives of the Low Country: the parent looks with a wishful eye to the South, for the advancement of the child. On his knowledge of classical learning and the English language, every promotion through life is thought entirely to depend. When his education is completed, he is fixed in some profession, the knowledge of which takes up his next period of life. When he has time to look around him, and reflect on the beauties of his mother-tongue, he

he is too far advanced in years, to sit down to study the rudiments of it; and his indolence is in some measure justified by the scarcity of books written in it, to which he can find access. He is therefore necessitated to content himself with hearing and rehearsing the nervous compositions it contains; which he can no more reduce to writing, than the unlettered bard can, who repeats them to him. Hence poetry, with a few exceptions, is neglected by the learned in the Highlands. — We shall next see, by whom it is preserved.

When the rich send their sons to the university, to search for science, the poor send theirs to the mountains, to look after their cattle. These, as the land is not in general favourable to agriculture, constitute the principal wealth of the country; and, consequently, their preservation becomes the first object of attention. The mountains, on which they feed, being extensive, little time is exhausted in attending them. Leisure and retirement beget reflection; and the mind, undisturbed by the bustle of society, has full scope to look back to the tales of other years. The scenery in ancient poetry is familiar to the eye; and the breast, hi-

thereto vacant, is ready for its reception. Thus the inferior sort of people search for persons, who can rehearse those poems; and they learn them with incredible facility. And in this manner they acquire an early acquaintance with the illustrious characters, celebrated in the traditions of their country,

But, to return to the subject: Mr. Macpherson, in an advertisement, prefixed to the originals, he has published as a specimen, says, "The words are not, after the Irish manner, *bristled* over with useless and quiescent consonants; so disagreeable to the eye, and which rather embarrass than assist the reader." —

This drew upon him an attack from Colonel Vallancey, who is allowed to be an ingenious Celtic antiquarian. The Colonel endeavours to defend the Irish language from the imputation of *bristliness*, in the manner of a gentleman and a scholar. The passage from Mr. Macpherson, with the Colonel's criticism, is quoted by Mr. Shaw with an air of the highest triumph and satisfaction. He pronounces the difference of orthography used by these gentlemen, to be an unanswerable argument, that the Poems of Ossian must be spurious. Here one cannot

peruse

peruse the Colonel's defence of the Irish with greater satisfaction, than he must view Mr. Shaw's conduct with indignation, for bringing this as an argument against the authenticity of Ossian's Poems, after what he himself had written. Mr. Shaw says in the 15th page of his *Analysis*, "Unlike the Irish, the Scots Gaelic delights to pronounce every letter, and is *not bristled over* with so many useless and quiescent consonants. The English and the French are infinitely more difficult to pronounce." Here he makes use of Mr. Macpherson's own words. Let the reader compare this passage with the present publication, and withhold the name of IMPOSTOR from its author, if he can. One of his assertions must be false, *intentionally* false too: for they relate not to matter of opinion, but are positive allegations, concerning a language, which, *he says*, he understands as well as any man living. Yet this very man has the consummate assurance, to hold himself forth as a paragon of integrity; and the periodical papers of England are filled with his praise — as such, representing him as a miracle of sincerity and truth.

Great part of Mr. Shaw's pamphlet is taken up with a feeble and fruitless attack on

Dr. Blair's elegant *Disertation on the Poems of Ossian*. No facts, however, that have the faintest foundation in truth, are produced against the *Disertation*; and the reader will scarcely imagine, that the Doctor stands in need of support from any other writer, against the arguments of such an opponent as Mr. Shaw. The following assertions, however, are very remarkable.

“Dr. Blair,” says Shaw, “of all men living, has the greatest reason to be displeased, who has been imposed upon, and led to write in defence of a forgery;” p. 19. “The Doctor (Blair), how strenuously soever he has endeavoured to make *them* appear authentic, must have known better; for some say, it is the promiscuous production of Dr. Blair and Mr. Macpherson:” p. 39.

I shall leave the reader, to make his own reflections on these two paragraphs, and reconcile them, if he can.

But Mr. Shaw proceeds, and says, “The truth is, Dr. Blair and Professor Ferguson, when Dr. Piercy was at Edinburgh, took ca-

"re to introduce a young student of divinity
 "from the Highlands, who rehearsed some ver-
 "ses, of which Professor Ferguson said, such
 "and such passages in Fingal were the transla-
 "tion," p. 46.

I have personally applied to these two
 learned and elegant writers; and they have au-
 thorised me to assure the public, that the who-
 le is, in every particular, a *falsehood*. Upon
 such authority, the public will not hesitate to
 treat the story with the contempt it merits.

Similar to this fiction, relative to two of
 the first literary characters of this age as well
 as nation, is what Shaw alleges concerning his
 interview with Mr. Macpherson, on the subject
 of the Poems of Ossian. The distance of my
 place of residence from that gentleman, prevent-
 ed me from applying to him in person. I cho-
 se therefore to request a friend, to wait upon
 him in London, rather than write to him.
 That friend accordingly called upon him in my
 name; and he gave him in substance the follow-
 ing detail. His words were, as nearly as my
 friend can recollect, "That, several years ago,
 "Mr. Shaw called at his house, and introduced

"himself without either recommendation or prior
 "acquaintance whatsoever, but merely as a na-
 "tive of one of the Scotch isles, and a man
 "who had studied the Gaelic language. That
 "the avowed object of his calling was to solicit
 "Mr. Macpherson's interest to promote a sub-
 "scription for a grammar of the Gaelic language,
 "which he had written, or had in contempla-
 "tion to write. That, as a specimen of his
 "knowledge of the Gaelic language, he left for
 "Mr. Macpherson's perusal and judgment, a trans-
 "lation of Mr. Pope's Messiah; which has been
 "since printed, and annexed, by Mr. Shaw, to
 "his Grammar. That Mr. Macpherson, upon
 "perusal of this specimen, conceived a very in-
 "different opinion, both of Mr. Shaw's poetical
 "talents and knowledge of the Gaelic; as the
 "language was the very worst dialect of the
 "Gaelic tongue, (that spoken in the isle of Ar-
 "ran), and the words throughout, misspelt, and
 "scarcely intelligible. That Mr. Shaw called
 "repeatedly; but at long intervals, upon Mr.
 "Macpherson; by whom he was received only
 "with a cold and distant civility, which might
 "be understood from his not returning any one
 "of Mr. Shaw's visits. That he does not recol-
 "lect, that Mr. Shaw ever presumed to ask a
 "light

"light of his manuscripts; and that, even if he
 "had, Mr. Macpherson should not have indulged
 "his curiosity, as he both disliked the manners
 "of the man, and knew that he was not capable
 "of forming any just judgment upon the mat-
 "ter. That, whatever farther, than what is stat-
 "ed above, has been either written or said by
 "Mr. Shaw, relative to personal interviews with
 "Mr. Macpherson, is mere exaggeration, or a
 "fiction meant to deceive and mislead the pub-
 "lic." Mr. Macpherson also authorised my friend,
 to declare to me, "That the allegation of Mr.
 "Shaw, that the manuscripts in the hands of
 "Mr. Mackenzie are the same, that were depo-
 "sited with his bookfeller, by Mr. Macpherson,
 "for the inspection of the public, is an *absolute*
 "*falsehood*; as the last mentioned manuscripts
 "have never been out of Mr. Macpherson's pos-
 "session, since he withdrew them from Mr. Bec-
 "ket's shop, after they had remained there for
 "many months."

As for my own part, I mention the very
 names of men of literary eminence with respect.
 What then must I feel, when I see a man,
 distinguished for nothing less than for genius,
 truth, and candour, attempting to emerge from
 his

his natural obscurity, by an open attack upon the moral characters of men, who are an honour to their country, and an ornament to polite literature; and who, I am convinced, are as much above the reach of *my* praise, as Mr. Shaw is below *their* contempt?

Mr. Shaw proceeds, and says, "A collection has lately been made up and published at Edinburgh, three years ago, by an ingenious translator, Mr. Clarke, entitled, *The Caledonian Bards*. It has been reviewed at London, and adduced as an argument for the genuineness of Fingal. Mr. Clarke, when I charged him with it, confessed, that it was entirely made up. One of the poems of that collection is happily set off with the title of *The Words of Woe*. The author told me, all he had for the ground-work of it, was a song called *Furram na zruaidhe*, composed on a late emigration of the Highlanders to America. In the same manner the rest of the collection was made up. It, however, does Mr. Clarke's ingenuity credit; although, in general, for the honour of his country, he also wishes to carry on the fraud of Ossian." P. 30.

I take up the reader's attention, in what concerns myself in this pamphlet, with particular

lar reluctance. When I presumed to lay a small specimen of translations, executed in the course of my private hours, before the public, I little imagined, that they would have produced an open attack upon my moral character. Criticisms of a *different* nature Mr. Shaw might have extended through pages, without giving the smallest uneasiness to me, or the public having been troubled with any defences of mine. Here, however, is a serious charge; and I shall give it a *very serious answer*, That it is **FALSE** ~~very~~ *grossly false*, and without the least foundation in truth. I have had conversations with many hundreds, on the subject of the Gaelic poetry; and if one *honest man* (for I place my opponent in a different class) will say, that ever he heard me utter words similar to these, which he puts into my mouth, I shall readily permit my name to be branded with eternal infamy.

Furam na truaidhe is here said to have been composed on a late emigration of the Highlanders to America. Now, if the reader will take the trouble to look into Mr. Macdonald's collection of original Gaelic poems, p. 251, he will find this beautiful elegy there; and that
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it contains nothing of that nature, but abounds with the overflowings of sorrow, poured forth by a lady on the death of a chief. This poem was currently known in the Highlands, for years before the people of that country ever thought of emigrating from their native land. We need not therefore be surprised, to hear our Inquirer denying the existence of poems orally recited, when he has the *unmatched assurance*, to write falsehoods concerning those published in the original language, and in every Celtic reader's hands, long before my translations were either made or published.

I am tired, and I fear I have tired the reader much more, with joining falsehood to the name of Mr. William Shaw; tho' downright fictions merit little more than *flat contradictions*: and yet I am roused to a repetition of those disagreeable *contradictions* in every page of his pamphlet; for there is not a page, that is not replete with the most impudent falsehoods. Amidst the agitation, which an honest mind feels at every daring violation of veracity, I sometimes hesitate, whether the respect due to *truth*, or the good manners to which the reader is entitled, should predominate. But as an at-

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tention to truth is in itself commendable, I trust I shall be excused for expressions, which under that consideration cannot be deemed too severe. Without making use of harsh epithets, I *flatly contradict* the following paragraph in p. 18. of Mr. Shaw's pamphlet. "I can easily prove, that these lines (the original of the 7th "book of Temora) have never been known to "any Highlander in Scotland, before he (Mr. "Macpherson) published them: but to my certain knowledge, within these few years, an "illiterate Highland porter, or cady, of Edinburgh, has got them by heart, being frequently read to him by a gentleman (Mr. Clark) "zealous to support the imposture. This gentleman is himself an *ingenious* translator."

In a conversation with Mr. Shaw, on the subject of Gaelic poetry, he observed, that, amongst all the poems of Ossian, which he had found in the Highlands, he had never met with the 7th book of Temora, published by Mr. Macpherson. I replied, that an illiterate Highlander, residing in Edinburgh, had rehearsed it to me, much in the same words, that Mr. Macpherson had published it; — and therefore, that I had not taken it down, as I was possessed

essed of the book. He wished to hear him; and he was sent for to a tavern, where he rehearsed some part of this poem, along with many others. This is all that I know of the matter. I have not spoken to this man, since Mr. Shaw's pamphlet appeared. He is a foldier in the city-guard; and if any person will take the trouble to inquire after him, he will find it to be a truth, that he had learned that poem, long before he ever saw me.

It is very remarkable, that, though I had confessed *myself* an impostor, I should have submitted to so much drudgery, to support the credit of Mr. Macpherson. To love our neighbour as ourselves, is a very well-known injunction; but to love him *better*, is a species of morality, which mankind have yet to learn.

Mr. *Smith* is next brought forward. This gentleman, by his ingenious history of the Druids, and his very elegant translations from the Gaelic, has drawn upon him the virulence and scurrility of our inquirer. Mr. Smith's character, as an honest man, is too firmly established, to require any support from me; and his abilities as a writer, stand confessed among the friends of genuine taste.

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The first *period*, concerning this gentleman, is remarkably long; and it contains three very extraordinary assertions. In the beginning, we are told, that he is a man of great modesty and worth — in the middle, that he is robbing Mr. Macpherson of his just right — and in the end, that he is an impostor. The reader must reconcile these contradictions in the best manner he can; since Mr. Shaw has not done it for him.

Mr. Shaw says, "Mr. Smith tells us the names and residence of men in his neighbourhood, *who* he has heard, for weeks together, rehearse ancient poems, many of which were Ossian's; but he has not given us a single line of them, as a fact, in his Dissertation:" p. 33. This is another falsehood; for if the reader will examine Mr. Smith's book, he will find *six hundred and forty-eight* lines of the original of Ossian.

Mr. Shaw proceeds, and asserts, "Nor, were I to call upon him (Mr. Smith) to produce the Gaelic of any forty lines in either Fingal or Temora, *he* could *not* produce them;" p. 42. This is a remarkable paragraph. It be-

gins with a supposition, which is not just; and concludes with a positive asserion, which is not true. To draw final conclusions from conjectural reasons, and tell us, that a thing *must* have happened, because it *might* have happened, is a mode of reasoning, with which logicians are yet unacquainted.

Mr. Shaw knows very well, that proposals have been put up in the Shop of Mr. Charles Elliot, bookseller in Edinburgh, eighteen months ago, for publishing the originals of the poems, which Mr. Smith has translated from the Galic. The list of subscribers, though not very numerous, is respectable. Our Inquirer, however, endeavours to prevent their publication, by an exertion of his usual ingenuity, telling us, that they are Mr. Smith's own composition. He has, however, been rather unlucky in the means, he has used to accomplish his ends. His arguments turn directly against himself.

Our Inquirer informs us, repeatedly, that the most ancient poems, he has met with in the Highlands, are the *compositions of the fifteenth century*; that they display no mark of genius; that they are full of enchantment, witchcraft, hob.

hobgoblins, and such other stuff, as marks a futile and contemptible performance; and that they can bear no translation. We are told, that the originals, which Mr. Smith is going to publish, must be bad — (the reader will surely stare at the reason), because they are *not* composed by those illiterate bards, whom Mr. Shaw has reprobated through the whole of his pamphlet, but by Mr. Smith himself, whose literary merit does honour to an enlightened age. I exaggerate nothing on this point; let Mr. Shaw's words speak for themselves.

"All they (the Highlanders) could repeat, "was nothing but a few fabulous and marvellous verses or stories concerning Fiann Mac-Chumhal, alias Fingal, and his Fionz, or "followers, chasing each other from island to "island, striding from mountain to mountain, "or crossing a frith at a hop, with the help of "his spear. There was much of enchantment, "fairies, goblins, incantation, *rhymes*, and the "second-fight:" P. 57. "Sometimes representing "the heroes as men, at other times as giants, "sometimes probable, and often marvellous; none of which can bear a translation:" P. 49.

After such a description of the ancient poetry of the Highlands, one would imagine, that

Mr. Smith could claim no great share of merit, for writing poetry *equally good* at least. But, notwithstanding this gentleman's extraordinary talents and extensive learning, Mr. Shaw tells us, he has not been able to accomplish even this. For we are informed, "That, if the two "copies do not fit each other better than the "specimens already given, and if the *Gaelic poem* "try be not better, we shall be at no loss to "judge, which is the original; and when it "appears, we shall not neglect pointing out "the vulgarisms and local phraseology to the few "of his countrymen, that are judges of the "tongue:" P. 49. "Mr. Smith has not given us "that of the old poet, but those he made from "his English original; the local phraseology, "and the forced strain of which, to any discerning reader, points out the imposition:" P. 48.

It would be an insult to the reader's judgment, to insist any farther on this part of the argument. It is curious to observe, how our author sometimes stumbles upon the truth, notwithstanding all his endeavours to avoid it. If Mr. Shaw himself could not carry on a deception through an eighteen-penny pamphlet, how

how could the translators from the Gaelic succeed through volumes, without one slip, which the penetrating eye of criticism could catch hold of? The purity and elegance of Mr. Smith's translations, will speak to future times, for themselves, in far more favourable terms, than any thing which I can write in their vindication. But, though I admire Mr. Smith's elegant taste, and respect his shining abilities, I am very much of Mr. Shaw's opinion, that he is utterly incapable of composing any thing equal to the sublime originals, he has translated.

Our author proceeds — “Then an ingenious apology would have been contrived — the man had died of a fever, or had emigrated to America. Some such misfortune has befallen the whole of them; for all the Highlands have not been able to show three lines, excepting those Mr. Macpherson translated as a specimen, and which in reality are his own translations.” P. 42.

Our Inquirer still continues to write, what he *knows* is not true. In about two pages only of his own Analysis (p. 157.) we have the original of *Malvina's Dream by Ossian*, extending

to *fifty-eight* lines, with the literal translation by Mr. Macpherson subjoined, besides other specimens from that bard. These were never published by Mr. Macpherson. In p. 133 of the *Analysis*, at the foot of another quotation from *Offian*, we have these remarkable words:

"These lines have beauties, which the translation; (Mr. Macpherson's), notwithstanding its excellence, has not been able to display."

I should like to hear Mr. Shaw pay a *modest* compliment to his own abilities, by telling us, that he translated the lines alluded to, from the English. If he does, I shall be at no loss for an answer to him: suffice it for me to say, at present, They are *Offian's*. He has indeed favoured us with a translation of Mr. Pope's *Messiah*, and some other pieces, from English, into Gaelic poetry. But oh! how different from *Malvina's Dream*! He has, indeed, had the prudence to save himself from the possibility of any particular criticism; for I defy him to find one Highland scholar, who can make two lines of it approach, in the least, to common sense, or even understand the meaning of his very words: — probably he has gone upon an old
sup-

supposition, that, what is *not understood*, must be *admired*.

Thus it appears from Mr. Shaw's own writing, that what he asserts is *not true*; and that more of the original of Ossian is to be found, than Mr. Macpherson has translated.

"Why not publish (says he) large extracts from these manuscripts? — Are they afraid, that the Highland public, who are so zealous to establish the authenticity, will not purchase? It cannot be believed; but the reason is, they are not to be found:" P. 45. Our author forgot to place the signature of irony after this paragraph. But those who know, what pushing and sollicitation Mr. Shaw had to make, before he could procure subscribers to indemnify the expence of publishing his own Dictionary of that language, will read this passage with a proper tone. I have just now before me a letter, written by Mr. Shaw, advising me not to publish any originals. As there is nothing of a private nature contained in the letter, the following extract from it can do no hurt to Mr. Shaw, where he ought not to be hurt; and it will explain this matter.

"The Gaelic is the worst subject, you can
 "use your pen upon. The Highlanders them-
 "selves, that have taste, are poor, and buy no
 "books; those who have any thing, despise
 "both the language and those who speak it,
 "but when they have regiments to raise."

The question has been thus answered by
 Mr. Shaw himself, long before he put it; and
 the passage requires no comment.

Mr. Shaw tells us, that he offered to pur-
 chase any number of lines of the original of
Osian, from Professor *Macleod* of Glasgow, not
 under six, at the rate of half a crown each
 word.

As the answer to this assertion could only
 come with propriety from Professor *Macleod*
 himself, I used the freedom to apply to that
 gentleman, through the medium of a friend,
 who has the honour of his acquaintance. The
 Professor, with that liberality which marks his
 character, wrote me, in consequence of my
 friend's application, the following letter, the
 original of which is in my possession.

"Sir,

“Sir,

“In answer to your inquiry, respecting the
 “use made of my name in the pamphlet against
 “Mr. Macpherson, I beg leave to assure you,
 “that the pamphleteer has taken those liberties
 “with my name, most improperly, without my
 “knowledge, and without a due regard to truth.
 “In particular, I declare, that *Mr. William*
 “*Shaw* never did challenge me to produce any
 “number of lines of the original of *Offian’s*
 “poems, offering to pay me half a crown *per*
 “word, for all that I should produce; and that
 “no such challenge was given, nor offers made,
 “nor any thing to the same purpose said, by
 “any person, at any time, either to me, or to
 “any other in my hearing. I have only to add,
 “that, if any such offer should hereafter be
 “made, by any man possessed of half-crowns, I
 “shall not hesitate to accept the condition; as-
 “sured as I am, that I shall find no difficulty
 “in procuring any number of lines of the origi-
 “nal poems. Mr. Macpherson, with whom I
 “had the happiness of commencing a very ear-
 “ly acquaintance at college, read a considerable
 “part of those poems to me in the original
 “*Gaelic*, before the publication of his version;
 “and it was owing to my own engagements

“at the time, and not to any backwardness on
 “his part, that I had not the pleasure of hearing
 “him read the whole. He lately indulged me
 “with the original of several passages of both
 “the poems of Fingal and Temora, to gratify
 “a third gentleman, who wished to have those
 “passages in *Gaelic*; and I have not the least
 “doubt of his disposition to oblige me, or any
 “man who applies to him like a gentleman, in
 “the same way again, or by giving any other
 “satisfaction on the subject, that can be reason-
 “ably desired.

“I have the honour to be, &c.”

To Mr. John Clark,

Bristo - Street, Edinr.

H. MACLEOD.

We have seen, from the above, that Mr. Shaw made no *pecuniary* offer whatsoever to Professor Macleod. But if he will be so very obliging, as to make a similar offer to me, I shall engage, to ease him of all the cash he has to spare.

It will be needless to say any thing with respect to the general attack, which Mr. Shaw has made on the character of the gentlemen and clergy of the Highlands, whose testimonies have been produced as proofs of the authentic-
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ty of Ossian's poems, by Dr. Blair in his *Critical Dissertation*. The public shall be left to judge, whether the evidence of so respectable a number of men of fortune, veracity, ability, and learning, or that of Mr. Shaw, is most to be relied on, from the specimens, I have given of his *adherence to truth*.

Mr. Shaw says, "A gentleman promised to ornament a *scolloped shell* with silver, if I should bring him one from the Highlands, and to swear, it was the identical shell, out of which Fingal used to drink." P. ult.

I showed this paragraph to a respectable baronet, little knowing, he had any concern in it. He started from his chair, with marks of the utmost astonishment; and told me, that he himself was the gentleman alluded to. He said, that he had once desired Mr. Shaw, to bring a scolloped shell from the Highlands, such as our ancestors used to drink out of; and that he would have it mounted with silver, to show his friends the manner of drinking in the days of Fingal. This was the whole of the story; and Mr. Shaw is hereby challenged, to abide by that he has given, or to give any other
repre-

representation of it. The gentleman himself makes no secret of the affair; but an illustrious race of ancestors, joined to his own equally illustrious character, renders his name too respectable, to be mentioned in conjunction with that of our author. Were I at liberty to mention the obligations, Mr. Shaw lies under to him, the reader would see falsehood and ingratitude to an extent, which they have seldom attained in the most corrupted age.

I have not yet been able to discover the Highland-clergyman, who is said to have offered himself, and also to procure others, to swear to a lie. In name of the whole body of Scotch clergymen, however, I pronounce it a falsehood; which, from the specimens I have given of the integrity of this *lover of truth*, the public will, I hope, find little difficulty in admitting.

But, if Mr. Shaw is most unjustly and illiberally severe on the private characters of those who oppose his assertions, he is scarcely more favourable to such as are friends to himself and his allegations; for they cannot be called his opinions. The *immortal* Dr. Johnson, as he
terms

terms him, is his known patron; not, I believe, from an opinion of his genius and good qualities, but on account of his (Mr. Shaw's) exertions to gratify his resentment or his prejudices. But notwithstanding the obligations, he is said to owe to the Doctor; either through folly or design, he exposes him in the pamphlet, which is the subject of this Essay, by printing, as I am told, a mutilated copy of a letter, alleged to have been written by Dr. Johnson to Mr. Macpherson, in the year 1775.

The letter, whether real or fictitious, is of no moment. The fact, I am assured by a friend, was as follows:

Mr. Macpherson had written to him, by the hands of a gentleman, that, as he had declined to withdraw from his book the injurious expressions reflecting on Mr. Macpherson's *private* character, his age and infirmities, alone, protected him from the treatment due to an infamous liar and traducer. The letter he could receive only through the hands of Dr. Johnson, who could also have supplied him with the other. But it seems, they were afraid to exhibit both together, as the contrast must have

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appeared striking, between the representation of a gentleman on an occasion, which called so loudly for an explanation; and the polite epithets or terms, *foolish*, *impudent*, *ruffian*, *cheat*, *imposture*, *immoral*, which constitute the Doctor's answer.

"There has been lately published at London, a book entitled *Remarks on Dr. Johnson's Tour into the Hebrides*. This book has been many years in composing. It underwent a vast variety of editions in manuscript; and has been corrected, amended, and improved, by many hands in Scotland; and, finding its way to London, was prepared for the press by a friendly embellisher. These amendments and additions are ascribed by many to Mr. Macpherson himself. How far this is true, I do not pretend to say: but I am certain, it has been done by some person, who has lived in England, some man different from the ostensible author; for there are such local circumstances mentioned in the book, as a person, who had never been south of the Tweed, could not have been acquainted with. If it be Mr. Macpherson's composition, it is his last effort in this controversy.

"I shall

"I shall not take up my time with making
 "observations on the illiberalities and scurrilities,
 "of which it is made up; but only will point
 "out to the world such a fresh instance of im-
 "posture, as will astonish, in which the author
 "triumphs, as having proved the authenticity
 "of Ossian's poems. — The book was writ-
 "ten on purpose, to establish the genuineness
 "of the poems. How far it has succeeded, ap-
 "pears from the following fraud, the only ar-
 "gument adduced: — *But as Dr. Johnson*
 "*may think it too great a trouble, to travel again*
 "*to the Highlands for a sight of old manuscripts,*
 "*I shall put him on a way of being satisfied*
 "*nearer home. If he will but call some morning*
 "*on John Mackenzie, Esq. of the Temple, Secre-*
 "*tary to the Highland-Society, he will find in*
 "*London more volumes in the Galic language and*
 "*character, than perhaps he will be pleased to look*
 "*at, after what he has said. 'Among these is*
 "*a volume, which contains some of Ossian's poems.'*
 "— On reading the last sentence, I was over-
 "joyed, that the originals of Ossian were at
 "last discovered, notwithstanding my own bad
 "success in meeting with them. Being impa-
 "tient to see them, I accordingly lost no time
 "in waiting on Mr. Mackenzie; and, having
 looked

"looked over these volumes in manuscript, found
 "no compositions of Ossian therein! They are
 "manuscripts written in the Irish dialect and
 "character, on the subject of Irish and Highland
 "genealogy. — We have every reason to
 "believe, that this is the very manuscript, if
 "any, that was left at Becket's by Mr. Mac-
 "pherson, some time ago, with a view to im-
 "pose it as that of Ossian; for I am credibly
 "informed, this very piece was sent to Mr.
 "Mackenzie by him."

I have received the following letter from the
 reverend Mr. M'Nicol; which, together with
 what is said already by Messrs Macpherson and
 Mackenzie, will surely satisfy the public, as to
 the truth of what is asserted with respect to this
 learned clergyman. This *ostensible* author, it
 seems, can narrate a few *facts* without the as-
 sistance of the literati of London.

"Sir,

Lismore, Oct. 5. 1781.

"The pleasure of your very agreeable fav-
 "our of the 27th *ult.* I received in course. I
 "have seen Mr. Shaw's late publication. His
 "arguments are so far from being *formidable*,
 "that I read them with cool unconcern. They
 are

"are evidently the fumes of a brain overheated
 "with arrogance, and rendered highly rancorous
 "with spleen and disappointment. The perfor-
 "mance is a mock on all *sincerity*; and the au-
 "thor has so far overacted his part, as to inva-
 "lidate the very side of the question he meant
 "to support, by a rhapsody of the *grossest impo-*
 "*sitions*, and most *impudent falsehoods*, unsup-
 "ported by the smallest shadow of *evidence*: I
 "should reckon it, therefore, the highest disgra-
 "ce to any cause, to depend upon the testimo-
 "ny of such an advocate. If his other asser-
 "tions, as I have great reason to believe, is the
 "case, be founded on no better proof than
 "what he has suggested with regard to me,
 "there is not a *single truth contained in his who-*
 "*le composition*. I consider, what he has said
 "of my Remarks, as the highest panegyric,
 "when he insinuates, that *they were made up*
 "*by Mr. Macpherson*. The meaning of this seems
 "clearly to be, that none, except the chief
 "person concerned in the contest, was capable
 "of such a performance. Such a flattering in-
 "sinuation, had it come from a person of any
 "dignity, could not fail to rouse the vanity of
 "an author upon his first appearance; so that I
 "think, I might be worse employed, than in

"sending him a letter of thanks some of these
 "days. It may not, perhaps, be improper to
 "lay before the public a few solid facts, con-
 "cerning this *man of might*, this impudent re-
 "tailer of falsehoods. But I imagine, it might
 "make him consider himself of some consequen-
 "ce, were he to be taken any further notice of.

"Mr. Shaw talks, with his usual confiden-
 "ce, of my ignorance in Celtic characters, &c. &c.
 "and after giving a pompous detail, as if from
 "personal knowledge, of the progress of my MS.
 "before it was published; he then strongly in-
 "sinuates, that I am only the *ostensible author*,
 "as he fastidiously terms it, and ascribes the
 "book to Mr. Macpherson. Would not any per-
 "son naturally infer from this, that Mr. Shaw
 "must have known me? But, however surpris-
 "ing it may appear, I can assure the public in
 "the most solemn manner, and so far as they
 "are safe to trust to the word of a Scots clergy-
 "man, that he is as entire a stranger to my abi-
 "lities, as to my person. He never saw me,
 "nor corresponded with me. Though I would
 "trust little to any declaration of his, I dare
 "appeal to his own testimony, however falla-
 "cious in most respects, for the truth of this
 fact.

"fact. Let the world judge then, how this
 "friend to truth had access to know any thing
 "concerning my knowledge, except from *vague*,
 "unsupported assertions; his usual mode of rea-
 "soning. I dare say, it must surprise the pub-
 "lic, when I declare, I am in the same situa-
 "tion with regard to Mr. Macpherson. I ne-
 "ver had the honour of seeing him; I never
 "corresponded with him upon any subject; nor
 "has he ever seen my MS. so far as I know.
 "Let the public judge from this, if Mr. Shaw's
 "pretended facts be altogether such stubborn
 "things, as he arrogantly boasts! — *Latet*
 "*anguis in herba*. Let the world beware of the
 "consummate effrontery of this fluctuating par-
 "tisan!

"When Mr. Shaw called upon Mr. Seton
 "of Appin, who lives within two hours jour-
 "ney of me, under pretence of inquiring after
 "Gaelic antiquities, &c. he was directed to come
 "here. But this explorer of retired corners, this
 "friend to truth, this indefatigable inquirer af-
 "ter Ossian's originals, this man of state, who
 "degenerated so far from his pristine eminence
 "and high breeding, as to be frequently obli-
 "ged to creep into many an humble cottage on

"all *fours*; this distinguished personage, I say,
 "who pretends to have left nothing *undone*, that
 "might *be done*, for supporting the *expiring*
 "*dignity* of poor Scotland, and the *honour* of
 "the cause he was engaged in; would not deign
 "to visit my *obscure residence*, where, for any
 "thing he knew, he might venture to enter
 "even in an *erect posture*. This he prudently
 "evited, for fear of finding something, that
 "might tend to defeat the schemes he had con-
 "certed. When Mr. Seton informed him, he
 "might probably get some satisfaction from me,
 "as to the objects he *pretended* to have in view:
 "Mr. Shaw asked "if I was not the person,
 "who was said to be writing against *Dr. John-*
 "*son*?" Yes, replied Mr. Seton; and as you
 "seem to know so much about him, you ought
 "certainly to see him, *unless you mean to travel*
 "*like the Doctor*, and studiously avoid such
 "places, as are pointed out to you for intelli-
 "gence. What can the world expect from the
 "*confident* assertions, or *pretended* intelligence,
 "of a person so wavering in his disposition?
 "He changed *sides* once already; he changed
 "*even his creed* in matters of still *higher mo-*
 "*ments*. What security can the public have
 "then, that he has yet fixed his station, or
 "come

"come to his final resolution? When we are
 "assured, that this is the case, and that this
 "shuttlecock is confined to one party, then will
 "be the time to settle all disputes with him.
 "And yet, though he is in the above awkward
 "attitude, such is the effrontery of the man,
 "that he will not be put to the expence of a
 "conscious blush; but imagines, forsooth, he
 "must be thought of consequence, and claim
 "the attention of the public, because he is
 "noisy and insolent.

"My first acquaintance with Mr. Shaw's
 "character commenced so early, as his coming
 "to teach a grammar-school in Glenurchy.
 "From whence he thought prudent to decamp
 "after a few weeks residence: but I leave Mr.
 "Shaw himself, to explain the cause of this
 "sudden elopement.

"The next specimen, I had of him, was
 "in a letter from my esteemed friend Mr. M'In-
 "tyre of Glenoe; informing me, that he was
 "so inconsiderate, before he knew Mr. Shaw's
 "character, as to give him, for a few days,
 "till he should return from Mull, the perusal
 "of a collection of vocables, which he compil-

"ed for an intended *Gaelic dictionary*, and
 "which Mr. Shaw was bound in honour to re-
 "turn on his coming back from Mull; but that
 "he sent only such as he had time to copy off.
 "The rest he has not yet thought proper to
 "restore, for which Glenoe now threatens to
 "prosecute him. This shameful and glaring
 "*breach of confidence* was instantly made public
 "over the whole neighbourhood. And as the
 "complaint came from a person of Glenoe's
 "known modesty and integrity, Mr. Shaw's cha-
 "racter was immediately *blasted*, and marked
 "with the proper *stigma*. At that very time it
 "was thought prudent, as a *caveat* to the com-
 "munity, to send a note relative to the above-
 "mentioned fraud, to the publishers of the
 "*Weekly Magazine*. But they did not think
 "proper, to interfere with private characters.

"My next acquaintance with him was his
 "*Gaelic grammar and dictionary*; performances
 "of as despicable a nature, as ever disgraced
 "the press in this or any other age, and such
 "as are absolutely *below censure*. Notwithstand-
 "ing my avowed, I had almost said, enthu-
 "siastic, fondness for all performances of this
 "sort, that have the smallest spark of merit;

"I, with all such as know any thing of the
 "subject they contain, frequently lamented over
 "them with real *contempt* and *pity*; considering
 "them as downright *insults* to the public, and
 "mere *catchpennies*. His dictionary in particu-
 "lar is a *mock* upon common sense, and an in-
 "sult upon the public: because, in place of an
 "Albin-Gaelic dictionary, which he had pro-
 "mised, and was impatiently looked for, he
 "put off his subscribers with a pitiful, unmean-
 "ing *rap* of an *Irish vocabulary*, favouring
 "rankly of the *Arran dialect* deeply *Hibernized*.
 "Were it necessary, I could procure numbers
 "of the most respectable characters in the High-
 "lands, and all of them deeply versed in the
 "Gaelic language, to confirm the above asser-
 "tion. Mr. Shaw scorns to *advise*; he *imperious-*
 "*ly commands* the public, to pay no regard to
 "the declaration of any *Scotsman*, or indeed to
 "the whole community of *Scotsmen*, should they
 "unite as one man, to contradict *his single tes-*
 "*timony*, as to any fact whatever. This is a
 "new mode of argumentation, by which all
 "disputes will be easily settled in his favour.
 "And it is highly necessary for him, to take
 "shelter under this fallacious mask.

"When Mr. Shaw's treatment of Glenoe
 "was once made public, there was an end to
 "his procuring any more intelligence in this
 "part of the world, had he seriously meant it;
 "because different gentlemen instantly wrote one
 "another an account of his character, so as to
 "guard against his designs. And yet he would
 "persuade us, that the late Mr. Neill M'Leod,
 "with some others, were desirous of procuring
 "intelligence for him. Does he really imagine,
 "though mankind bore so long with his info-
 "lence, that they are become altogether such
 "gulls, as to give credit to so unlikely a tale?
 "We may be sure, few would entrust him with
 "MSS. after his intention was so publicly known.
 "For, if he saw any thing, that reflected the
 "smallest honour upon the country, they were
 "confident, he would destroy them. And I
 "would recommend to Mr. Mackenzie, to be
 "cautious in laying any MSS. before him for
 "the future. Let him beware of Glenoe's fate!

"In the preface to his Dictionary, Mr.
 "Shaw has the assurance, to *amuse* the public
 "with *imaginary* aid, he got from Mr. Archi-
 "bald M'Arthur, minister in Mull; with a
 "view, no doubt, to persuade the world, that
 he

"he was indebted, in this pitiful *cheat*, to per-
 "sons well acquainted with the Gaelic language.
 "This story stands as follows: Mr. M^rArthur
 "informed me, that he one day laid before Mr.
 "Shaw some vocables, he had collected for an
 "intended Gaelic Dictionary; but that he no
 "sooner observed him beginning to mark down
 "a few words, than he immediately gathered
 "his papers, and locked them by, as he knew
 "Mr. Shaw's design; so that he told me, he
 "was confident, he did not copy off a dozen of
 "words. Mr. Shaw, we see, can be sometimes
 "thankful for *small favours*, though he gave
 "Glennoe *no credit* for the vocables got from
 "him.

"Were I in your place, I would not hon-
 "our him with any answer, as to the main
 "question: — it will be sufficient to shew
 "the public, that his performance is one con-
 "tinued train of falsehoods, and reserve your
 "serious answers on that subject, for an oppo-
 "nent more worthy of them.

"I am, Sir, your, &c.

To Mr. John Clark,

Bristo-Street, Edinr.

DONALD M^rNICOLL.

I have now gone over the whole of what Mr Shaw calls his *stubborn facts*; and no troop, I believe, ever displayed less fortitude in the day of battle. I have not hitherto rested the merits of the question on the insufficiency of his arguments; nor on his gross ignorance of Celtic, and even English grammar; but I have charged him with avowedly publishing falsehoods, *knowing them to be such*. I have confined myself to the leading points of the question; for to drag forward every untruth, would be nearly a republication of his pamphlet. The personal animosities subsisting between the translator of Ossian and Dr. Johnson concerns not the merits of the present controversy; altho' I am convinced, it drew its existence from that circumstance alone.

So much for Mr. Shaw's *facts*; we shall next give a few specimens of his *arguments*.

"The *bison*, a species of wild cow, the peculiar native of the forests and mountains of Scotland, although now extinct, was certainly common in those days; yet no mention is made of it." P. 27.

I would

I would be very glad to know, how Mr. Shaw came to learn, that the bison was the peculiar native of Scotland, more than of other countries.

Since our Inquirer has not been able to prove the poems of Ossian spurious, from what they *do contain*, he endeavours to effect his purpose, from what they *do not contain*; and asserts, that they must be an imposition, because they contain not a list of all the beasts of the field. He has lately published a Dictionary, about four times the price of all the poems translated by Mr. Macpherson; yet it contains not one third of the language — the very word in question is not there.

The next infallible mark of imposition is, that "Hunting the wild *boar* is not mentioned."

— The assertion, however, is not true. Hunting the wild bear is often mentioned in poems in my possession, which go by the name of Ossian, though not in those translated by Mr. Macpherson. From these two *directions*, however, Mr. Shaw rears his crest with an ostentatious confidence, and concludes the victory to be decided in his own favour.

"It

"It were too much to suppose, that the
 "author could be so happy as to succeed in
 "every thing, and make the deception comple-
 "te. In an imposture, a man cannot shut every
 "avenue to detection. However, it has succeeded
 "far enough; a variety of editions have been
 "sold; and the author has acquired credit by
 "his ingenuity. — That was the great *desi-*
deratum. I, however, envy it not.

"O grant me honest fame, or grant me none!"
 P. 28.

If any one, personally acquainted with Mr.
 Shaw, can read the last line with gravity, he
 has obtained a command over his muscles, which
 I have not been able to acquire.

"Thither (to the Highlands) the author
 "went, to see the face of the country, and the
 "appearances of nature; besides that, he was
 "born and lived long in the mountains and val-
 "leys: Hence that seriousness which pervades
 "the whole, and which is so familiar to every
 "Highlander; and is one great reason, why
 "every one of them is so ready to believe the
 "Poems authentic." P. 29.

Our Inquirer has here acknowledged, what
 he has every-where else denied — that the
 High-

Highlanders *believed* the Poems authentic. Seriousness is here said to be familiar to every Highlander — I believe it: But how a serious man comes to be easier imposed upon, than one void of reflection, is not quite so clear.

"*Any* Englishman may go down and see these phenomena in the elements and face of the country; of which he may lay up a number, and write, when he comes home, poetry of the same nature." P. 29.

If *any* Englishman can write poems equal to those of Ossian, it is remarkable, that not one Englishman or Scotchman has ever produced one stanza as a specimen, except those who have *avowedly* translated them from the Gaelic. I am sure, Mr. Shaw will heartily join with me in saying, that the English and the inhabitants of the Low Country are far more learned than the modern Highlanders, who, he says himself, are at this day only emerged from a state of nature; that they have the advantage of the English being their mother-tongue, which the Highlanders are obliged to study from books, as a foreign language: yet, with all these advantages, I call upon Mr. Shaw, to produce
one

one piece, composed by one of them, equal even to the translations of the Poems of Ossian.

"I remember, when I travelled that country three years ago, to have sat down on a hill; and, the scene being favourable, in a poetic mood, I jingled together upon paper, with suitable invented Gaelic names, the epithets of *blue-eyed, meek-eyed, mildly-looking, white-bosomed, dark-brown locks, noble, generous, valiant, tears, spears, darts, hearts, harts, quivers, bows, arrows, helmets, steel, streams, torrents, noble deeds, other times, bards, chiefs, storms, songs, &c.* and produced a little poem, which reads pretty smoothly; and, if I had a mind to publish it, it would be no difficult matter to persuade some people, I had translated it from the Gaelic." P. 30.

This is the first time, that ever I heard of Mr. Shaw's being in a poetic mood; and the offspring of that mood is just what I would have looked for, "a jingle suitable" to the expectations of any person acquainted with Mr. Shaw's poetical abilities. This jingle, however, we are told, reads pretty smoothly: *prettiness* and *smoothness*, to be sure, are very necessary qua-

qualifications in a poet. — What a pity it is, that Mr. Shaw has not condescended to favour us with this *pretty smooth* piece of composition; and thereby prove himself to be as great a favourite of the Muses, as he tells us he is a *lover of truth*! But there was no great occasion for producing the poem. Mr. Shaw assures us, it is good; and he is a gentleman of too much *honour and veracity*, to suspect that his word would be called in question. Had Milton, Dryden, Pope, and the rest of those foolish poets, taken the same precaution, and given us their words, in place of their works, for their being good poets; it might have saved their memories from those censures, which have sometimes been pronounced against them.

“I have in my possession a small collection
 “of Galic poems, which I have been preparing,
 “(for I also was about to be a translator!) I
 “have made up a sort of a poem of some length,
 “from these few stanzas, entirely different from
 “Mr. Smith’s, only that we both retain the same
 “me Dargo as our mutual hero. If sale could
 “be expected for them, I should find it no
 “difficult matter, in my notes, to give specimens
 “of the *original*; and I am sure, I would
 avoid

"avoid giving those I received from the people,
 "because they cannot bear a translation. And
 "indeed Mr. Smith gives us not those of the
 "old poet, but those he made from his English
 "original; the local phraseology, and the forced
 "strain of which, to any discerning reader, point
 "out the imposition. In short, Mr. Smith's and
 "my little poem both retain the same name of
 "*Dargo*, have received none of the incredible
 "and marvellous feats of the few original lines,
 "and are each of them as different from it,
 "and from one another, as, perhaps, the ser-
 "mons would be, which he and I might write
 "upon one text." P. 47, 48.

Mr. Shaw proclaims himself a firm friend to
 truth, through the whole of his pamphlet; and
 tells us repeatedly, that "he would despise him-
 "self, were he capable of supporting an untruth."
 Yet we see, from the above passage, that *want of*
sale for his works was the only thing, that pre-
 vented him from publishing what he calls *forgeries*.
 I heartily agree with Mr. Shaw, that Mr.
 Smith's translation of *Dargo* and his would be
 very *different poems*. "

"Had I been ignorant of the Galic, less cre-
 "dit might be expected to my narration of facts;
 "but

"but having written a grammatical Analysis
 "and a Dictionary of it, it may be readily be-
 "lieved, I should rejoice to have it in my pow-
 "er to produce the originals of these poems
 "to the public, as the Dictionary and Grammar
 "might, perhaps, be sought after, to help the
 "curious in forming some opinion of the ori-
 "ginal. Thus it would be my interest, to
 "support the authenticity, did I think it hon-
 "est." P. 53.

Why should more credit be given to a Highlander's narration of facts, than that of any other person? I believe I have as much of the *amor patriæ* as Mr. Shaw; yet I would not presume to say, that another man was not to be credited as soon as a Highlander. Through almost every page of his pamphlet, he is constantly cautioning the reader, not to believe a Highlander, even upon oath; — and produces instances, where even clergymen offered to depone to a lie: yet here we see him claiming credit to his assertions, merely from his being a Highlander. As to the sacrifice of interest, said here to have been made to *truth*, it is, like the rest, without any foundation. Mr. Shaw sold the property of his Grammar, a few
 (g) months

months after its first publication, and had no farther concern with the sale. Mr. Jamieson, the proprietor, published a second edition at four shillings, after Mr. Shaw had *taken in* as many subscribers as he could, at 10 s. 6d. — If he expected sale for the Dictionary, it must have been in *England*; as he knew, it could not sell, where the language was *understood*.

We have seen, in every instance where Mr. Shaw appeals to facts, he has been, on the most unquestionable evidence, completely convicted as an impostor and a violator of *truth*. But there is still another evidence, which we mean to adduce, whose testimony will not probably be taken on any other subject, but on that under consideration. This evidence is Mr. Shaw himself, whom we shall now call to the bar of the public.

 SHAW

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

AN inundation of Barbarians from the northern parts overwhelmed the European continent. Letters, as affrighted, fled to the Hebrides and Ireland, for an asylum, where they flourished for some centuries. P. vi.

There are not; however, wanting, at this day, proofs sufficient to shew, the Gael were once a very considerable people. As late as the Roman invasion, all that part of Britain, north of the Tweed and Solway Frith, with several counties of South Britain, and all Ireland, with the adjacent islands, was inhabited by the Gael. P. vii.

IN the mean time I did not forget MSS. — Since I could not find the poems in the mouths of the people, I concluded, if they existed at all, that Mr. Macpherson must have found them in MSS.: but as I knew, the Earle was never written, I began to despair, and to doubt. P. 58.

By many it has been said, that the families of Ossian are taken from so remote a period of society, as to be a strong proof of the antiquity of the poem. I grant, the families in general are from nature. And why? Because the country described as the scene of action at this day, and its inhabitants, are in some degree but emerging from a state of nature. P. 29.

All

We

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

All charters, deeds, records, and laws, were now written in Latin or Scots. And the monasteries being pillaged by Edward, whatever was valuable in literature, was entirely lost. Ireland, which hitherto was subjected by no foreign lord, nor distressed by the encroachments of a neighbouring state, except some temporary invasions by the Danes, quietly enjoyed the use of its laws, language, and liberties. It was at this juncture that the Irish Seanaiches and annalists (when the Scots, having thrown off their extorted allegiance to England, their annals and records being irrecoverably destroyed by Edward, wished to have some account of their own origin) invented their hyperbolic
and

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

We will readily grant, that part of the contests in Ireland, and the war with Lochlin, is founded in history, because all the annals of Ireland have handed it down to us: but the author, in order to serve his purpose, wrests facts as they may best serve his end: and, apprehensive of a future detection, labours with great zeal to destroy the credit of all Irish history, and, with

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

and incredible Milesian expedition from Egypt and Spain to Ireland, and thence to Scotland by the promontories of Galloway and Cantire, Fordun, having no other materials, at once adopted this system, which gained universally in Scotland, until the ingenious Mr. Macpherson published his Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland. P. viii.

Though there were English colonies in Ireland, the Gael of that country enjoyed their own laws and customs, till the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. when the English laws were universally established. This is the reason, why the Ibero-Galic has more MSS. and books than the Caledonian. In

Scot-

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

a few bold strokes of his pen, obliterate all the Celtic learning ever known anywhere, in order to make way for a new system of Celtic emigration and Herodian and Fingalian history, in the Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, of which nothing was heard before. This book was published on purpose, to support the imposture of Fingal. P. 35.

No argument can be adduced in favour of Highland learning, from their ancient laws; for none, according to Mr. Macpherson himself, ever existed, except the will of the chieftain, until some partial and faint influences of it were felt in the reign of the latter Jameses. Private property has not been

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SHAW contra SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

Scotland there has been a general destruction of ancient records and books, which Ireland has escaped. It enjoyed its own laws and language till a later date, whilst the Scots-English very early became the established language in North Britain. P. ix.

The improvement of the country, as well as the minds of the inhabitants, has been strangely neglected, in an age when every other country emerges from obscurity and ignorance; till some changes were forced upon them by a late law, I shall not say how politic. To see a people naturally capable of every improvement, though once misled by ignorance, stripped of their ancient habits and customs, and deprived of the Scriptu-

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*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

legally ascertained until very lately; for the extent of a chief's territory depended on the number and valour of his vassals and followers. Hence it is, that few chieftains at this day can shew charters of any considerable date. P. 65.

In my tour in the Highlands, a respectable minister begged, I would set about a translation of Fingal; and that he and others would undertake to prove it the composition of Ossian, and procure affidavits for that purpose. We need not, therefore, be surprised to hear the Highlanders confidently talk of their having seen and heard them repeated, although none can produce a specimen. But to persist in affirming that he has it,

and

SHAW contra SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

res in their own tongue; the right of Christians, never denied to the most savage Indians; is at once a complication of inhumanity and imprudence. Better slay their bodies, to secure their affections, as Rome was wont to do with heretics, to bring their souls to heaven: than keep them in ignorance, with the expectation that, after some generations, the English manners, language, and improvements, may begin to dawn. At this day, there is no equal number of people in Britain, so useful to the state. Upon every emergency they supply our navy with good seamen, and our armies with valiant soldiers. But strip them of their dress, language, the name and honour of Gael,

and

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

and publishing dissertations to prove it; to rail and abuse all who will not believe him, is an insult on the party, and a "degree of stubborn audacity, the world has hitherto been unacquainted with." — It is the last subterfuge of guilt. The Highlanders and Scotch, very partial to their country and antiquities, although the translation might differ from what they might have heard repeated, would not take the trouble to detect it, as even that detection might be understood as an argument against their genuineness. They were glad of this new and unknown honour; and many of the names of the heroes in the poems being familiar to their ears, of which they had often

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*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.**Extracts from Mr.
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and they soon degenerate. Their habit, language, life, and honour, they always kept or parted with at once. The honour of the name, their habit, and a Galic speech, have always inspired them more, than the consecration of the colours. Government, by preserving these privileges, to them sacred as their *are & foci*, might have at least one part of the community, of whom they, on any emergency, might say with the Roman general, "I know, the tenth legion will not desert me." P. xii.

On the Ibero-Galic there have been written grammars by different hands. The Scots and Irish Galic, though not radically different, are two separate dialects of the same language. The words are almost always

ten heard mention made in the tales and fables of the Highlands in their youthful years, and, in some degree, at this day, could be easily led, by a little "Caledonian bigotry," not only to believe, but to vouch for their being a "literal translation." P. 71.

I am conscious, that, without a knowledge of Irish learning, we can know nothing of the Earse as a tongue, (the Irish being the studied language, and the Earse only a distant provincial dialect.) I cannot but

SHAW contra SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

the same, but differently orthographed, The Irish, in their grammars, have a more uncertain and various inflection in the termination, which the Scots Galic has not; and this inclines me to think, the Scots is the original, and that this inflection of termination in Irish grammar is the mark of an attempt by the monks, to polish it after the manner of the Greek and Latin. Father O'Molloy published his *Grammatica Latina-Hibernica* in 12mo at Rome, 1677; and Macurtin, his *Elements of the Irish*, at Louvain, 1728: bot of which merit only to be mentioned. P. xiii.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

but express my astonishment at the arrogance of any man, who, to make way for the production of 1762, would destroy all the archives, which the Irish, acknowledged by all the world to have been in the eighth century the most learned nation in Europe, have been for ages labouring to produce. When the Highlander knows nothing of Irish learning, he knows nothing of himself: and when Irish history is lost, Highland genealogy becomes very vague. The Irish had laws, many of which have come down to our own days, written in the ancient language. Fordun and Buchanan, although some centuries back, having no knowledge of their own origin, received the list of their

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an.

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

Unlike the Irish, the Scots Galic delights to pronounce every letter, and is not bristled over with so many useless and quiescent consonants. The English and French are infinitely more difficult to read and pronounce, and have many more silent and mute letters. In the Galic there are no such ugly-looking words, as *thought, through, strength*, &c. P. xv.

It was not the mercenary consideration of interest, nor perhaps the expectation of fame among my countrymen, in whose esteem its beauties are too much faded, but a taste for the beauties of the original speech of a now learned nation, that induced me, either to begin,

or

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

ancient kings, as recorded in the *Chron. Scotorum*, and other Irish books. P. 62.

Thither (to Ireland) the youth of England, and other countries, went for education; and all the popular stories of the Highlands at this day agree, that every chieftain went thither for education and the use of arms, from the fourth century until the Reformation. Icolmkill was first founded by the munificence of the Irish; and all the abbots and monks belonging to it, one abbot only excepted, until its dissolution, were Irish. All the Highland-clergy not only studied, but received ordination in Ireland. The clergy of the Islands especially, and those of the western coast, were frequently natives of Ire-

SHAW contra SHAW.

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Shaw's Analysis.*

or encouraged me to persevere, *Ibid.*

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

Ireland. Hence it happens, that all the poetical compositions, stories, fables, &c. of any antiquity, which are repeated in the Highlands at this day, are confessedly in the Irish dialect. Whatever bards existed in the Highlands, received their education at the Irish academies; and every stanza, that is remarkably fine or obscure, is still called *Galic dhoimhan Eirionnach*, i. e. deep Irish. P. 64.

I beheld with astonishment the learned in Scotland, since the revival of letters, neglect the Galic; as if it was not worthy of any pen, to give a rational account of a speech used upwards of two thousand years by the inhabitants of more than one kingdom. I saw, with regret, a language, once famous

Like

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

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Shaw's Analysis.*

mous in the western world, ready to perish without any memorial, by the use of which Galgacus, having assembled his chiefs, rendered the Grampian hills impassable to legions, that had conquered the world; and by which Fingal inspired his warriors with the desire of immortal fame. I wished an account given to the world, of a language, thro' which, for so long a period, the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion, were communicated to savage clans and roving barbarians, who, in past ages, becoming civilized, sung the praises of Him, who taught both the tongue to sound, and the thoughts to soar, within the walls of the illustrious Iona. P. vxi.

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Shaw's Inquiry.*

Like a true Scotchman, in order to make his composition more acceptable to his countrymen, Mr. Macpherson changes the name of Fionn Mac Cumhal, the Irishman, into Fingal, which indeed sounds much better; and sets him up a Scotch king over the ideal kingdom of Morven, in the west of Scotland. — It had been a better argument for the authenticity, if he had allowed him to be an Irishman, and made Morven an Irish kingdom, as well as made Ireland the scene of his battles: but, as he must needs make the hero of an epic poem a great character, it was too great honour for any other country but Scotland, to have given birth to so considerable a personage. P. 34.

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

An acquaintance with the Galic, being the mother-tongue of all the languages in the west, seems necessary to every Antiquary, who would study the affinity of languages, or trace the migrations of the ancient races of mankind. Of late it has attracted the attention of the learned in different parts of Europe; and shall its beauties be neglected by those, who have opportunities, from their infancy, of understanding it? Antiquity being the taste of the age, some acquaintance with the Galic begins justly to be deemed a part of the *Belles Lettres*. The language that boasts of the finished character of Fingal, must richly reward the curiosity of whoever studies it. Of this Sir James Fox is a rare in-
stan-

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

Names are quoted; who have given the originals. — Some of those I am acquainted with; and none of them (for nobody could be more diligent and inquisitive, than I have been) could ever produce any thing, but a few scattered fabulous stanzas, sometimes representing the heroes as men, at other times as giants; sometimes probable, and often marvellous; none of which can bear a translation. — All they (the Highlanders) could repeat, was nothing but a few fabulous and marvellous verses, or stories concerning Fionn Mac Cumhal, alias Fingal, and his Fiona or followers, chasing each other from island to island, striding from mountain to mountain, or crossing a frith at a hop, with
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SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

stance, who, in advanced years, has learned to read and write it; and now drinks of the Pierian spring untainted, by reading fragments of Poetry in Fingal's own language. P. xvii.

The richness of a language consists in the number of its primitives, and their capacity of various composition. The original simple principles of the Galic make it far excel any of the modern, and rival the most ancient languages. The little varied flexion of its nouns and verbs, which is peculiar to itself, and the abundance of its compositions, render it capable of beautifully describing and expressing the

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*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

the help of his spear. There was much of enchantments, fairies, goblins, incantations, rhimes, and the second sight. When I heard those of one country, I hear all; for they all repeated in general the same stories: and when I had the narration of a few, I had every thing. P. 57.

I can shew, from the language of religion, (for although Earle was never the vehicle of learning, and fierce chieftains would not submit to civil government, yet religion, blended with superstition, was in some degree acknowledged by them), nay, from even the stile of the pulpit at present in the Highlands, and the few books of piety they have lately published, that the Irish Galic was the

lan.

SHAW *contra* SHAW.*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

emotions of the mind, without the aid of foreign words; hence it is, that the illiterate peasant on the hills of Scotland, having, in his infancy, had his mind stored with a certain number of primitives and their different modes of inflection, by an easy, though a various combination with a certain number of particles, speaks his language with elocution, a natural Demosthenes; and there is no word in the language, however compounded, but he understands. Neither is this language deficient in the terms of art. In Ethics, Jurisprudence, Theology, and Natural History, words are not wanting to express our thoughts, and to instruct others: even in Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy

in

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

language of law, divinity, and poetry. The common Catechism, the Confession of Faith, the version of the Psalms sung in churches, are written in Irish; and the language of the minister when he preaches, and the extemporaneous effusion of the peasant's prayer, border upon it. As they received in the Highlands their knowledge of the Christian religion from Icolmkill, and Icolmkill from Ireland, all the terms in divinity are immediately Irish, and in the remote parts of the Highlands, at this day, not well understood. The Earse dialect is rather barren of words, having never been cultivated; and the preacher that introduces any idea beyond the Calvinistic system, is difficultly understood. —

It

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

in all its parts, terms can easily be rendered from the Greek into the Galic, by decomposing them in the original, and then translating and joining them afresh; an advantage of which no modern language is possessed.

P. cxi.

Sounds are either quick or slow, rough or smooth, strong or feeble. From the various modifications of these in a language, may, perhaps, be discovered, the manners, the temperament, and feelings of a people, at the time of its formation. The Gael, when their language was formed, seem to have been in that state of society, when the arts of peace and war were not entirely strangers; when it was an approved maxim, to "bind the strong in arms, but

"spa-

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

It will be in vain to reason abstractedly, even on morality; and the audience, not only strangers to the sentiment, but even to the expression, cannot always comprehend the speaker. P. 65.

When I asked, and particularly those who were possessed of any poetry, songs, or tales, who Fionn was? — for he is not known by the name of Fingal by any: — I was answered, that he was an Irishman, if a man; for they sometimes thought him a giant, and that he lived in Ireland, and sometimes came over to hunt in the Highlands. This is the universal voice of all the Highlanders, — excepting those who are possessed of abilities

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SHAW contra SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.**Shaw's Analysis.**Extracts from Mr.**Shaw's Inquiry.*

"spare the feeble hand; be- ties and knowledge to per-
 "a stream of many tides use the work of Mr. Mac-
 "against the foes of thy pherson, and are taught
 "people, but like the gale by nationality to support
 "that moves the grass, to an idle controversy,
 "those who ask thy aid." —

*Parcere subjectis, debellare
 superbos.* Such was the ge-
 nius of the language in the
 days of Trenmor and of Fin-
 gal; and even now it is the
 most suited, either to rouse
 the soul to fears of arms, or
 inspire pity in the relentless
 breast;

"To soften rocks, and
 bend the knotted oak."

P. cxxvii.

No language is more sus-
 ceptible of rhyme than the
 Galic: it is not, like the
 Greek and Latin, chained to
 certain terminations, which
 refuse rhyme; but at once
 admits of all the variety of

In the Chronicon Scottorum:

from which the list of the
 Scotch kings is taken; and
 the pretended manuscripts,
 they so much boast of, to
 be seen in the Hebrides;
 there is not one syllable
 said of such a name as Fin-
 gal. A map so thirsty af-
 ter fame, would surely
 court an opportunity of
 an- meet-

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

ancient and modern verification. Final rhyme in Galic does not consist in terminations of similar letters, but in the last strongly pronounced vowel or diphthong in a word. P. cxxix.

meeting the contemporary Romans, who certainly would not fail to make mention of so great a hero. P. 35.

The Galic poetry, unlike the English, which is generally confined to disyllables and monosyllables, admits of words of any length. Galic poets never yet wrote by any other rule, than the ear, and certain pieces of music; and for that reason, though we may easily see, what sort of measure each piece delights in, the uniformity of the same number of similar measures in every line does not always return. P. cxxx.

It is impossible, if ever they existed, that the bards and others, who could write, within these three last centuries, should not have collected them. Whatever songs and episodes Ossian sung, did not long survive himself; and it was difficult for former bards, to anticipate the compositions of the age of chivalry. P. 61.

The measure of Ossian's poetry is very irregular and various. Generally he has couplets

All the Highlands has not yet been able to shew three lines, excepting those Mr.

SHAW *contra* SHAW.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Analysis.*

couplets of eight, though they do not rhyme, and seven, and sometimes nine syllables. These feet are most commonly trochee and dactyle. The trochee occupies the first, dactyle the second and third, and a long syllable ends the line.

*Extracts from Mr.
Shaw's Inquiry.*

Mr. Macpherson published as a specimen, and which, in reality, is his own translation. If they believe themselves, let them enjoy it, and not attempt to bully the world into a belief of that, for which no sort of evidence has yet been produced.

After what has been said, it is doubtful, whether the following paragraph of Mr. Shaw's pamphlet, ought to be read with more surprise or contempt. It is taken verbatim from p. 37, where he says, "*I never yet could dissemble nor personate a hypocrite. — Truth has always been dearer to me than my country. I can show Dr. Johnson, that there is one Scotchman who loves truth better than his country, and that I am a sturdy enough moralist to declare it.*"

Though the hurry of avocations, more important to me than a detection of Mr. Shaw,

has induced me to be very brief in discussing the subject: I fear, the reader will think, that more than enough, to confute my antagonist, has been already written. But every day, that I delay the publication, brings new matter to my hands. Since my design has become known, I have had several intimations relative to the strange conduct and unequalled absurdity of Mr. Shaw, during his *investigating peregrination*, to use the words of his patron, through the Highlands of Scotland. This subject, however, is too mean in itself, and too uninteresting to the public, to merit their attention. It is sufficient to observe, that it would be difficult to distinguish, whether our Inquirer's vanity or his folly was greatest. In places where he was not known, at least where *he* thought he was not known, he endeavoured to pass for a man of fortune, who was making a tour of pleasure. Where men were no strangers to his situation, he became a suppliant for subscriptions to his Dictionary; thus assuming the character of gentleman and beggar, as best suited his vanity or his necessities. In some places, however, what may be near the truth, came out; where he acknowledged, that he was travelling the Highlands, at the expence of some per-

persons in England, to gather facts and arguments against the authenticity of Ossian's Poems. Though nothing, our author says, is to be implicitly taken for truth, there is an appearance of it, in what has been last mentioned. Though his expences could not have been great, and the horses, he so often and so pompously mentioned, were only Highland *ponies*: it cannot be supposed, that from the wretched stipend allowed to him as a private tutor, he could have defrayed those expences, small as they might have been. There is therefore reason to believe, that another *great writer* loosed his purse-strings for our author, upon the above occasion. There was the more need for this seasonable aid, as the disagreeable manner of our traveller disgusted the people in general; and made them, with regard to him, depart from the characteristical hospitality of their country. To the inferior sort, who are by nature polite and affable to strangers, his forward presumption became intolerable; and their aversion to him and his inquiries, was much heightened, by the strange and unintelligible gibberish, which he spoke, under the name of *Gaelic*. No wonder, therefore, that they were so uncommunicative with respect to a man, whom

they disliked for his manner, and despised for his ignorance.

Doctor Johnson, somewhere in the RAMBLER, advises his reader, when he wishes to know a man's private character, to apply to his servants. John Stewart, who attended Mr. Shaw through the Highlands in that capacity, is at present hair-dresser to a friend of mine. I inquired, if he remembered of his master creeping on all fours into houses in the Highlands? He mentioned two instances, as the only ones he could point out. He said, they were obliged to creep into Mr. Shaw's father's in the isle of Arran: The other instance, I forbear to mention, as it would add no lustre to Mr. Shaw's character as a *clergyman*. I am well aware of the censure, I may meet with, even from the humane and liberal, for throwing out this insinuation against Mr. Shaw, on account of his original obscurity. My benevolence is particularly hurt, while justice to my country compels my hand to draw the picture: But a man brought up in one of the humblest cottages in the Highlands, might have even deigned to enter others equally low, without any national reflections. This observation flows not from that arrogance, with which assuming wealth

wealth exults over the sons of misery and distress. To convince Mr. Shaw, how little I would have considered his poverty as a *stigma*, had he acted the part of an honest man; I scruple not to inform him, that my own family, during the lifetime of my father, was reduced from a state of opulence, to a situation nearly equal to his own.

I inquired at the same John Stewart, as to the amazing sums of money, which Mr. Shaw talks of having spent for snuff, whisky, &c. in the Highlands. As to the snuff, he declares, it did not cost Mr. Shaw one penny. Whisky and money, given for information, he believes, could not exceed two guineas; at least he can depone, that it was within three; as he used generally to tell the people, after they had recited their poems, and he had taken them down in writing, that they had no merit, and therefore he would give them nothing for their trouble. Mr. Shaw says, he made offer to Professor Macleod of so many half-crowns; I wish he had remembered another person, who stood *far more* in need of them, and had surely a *prior claim* upon Mr. Shaw. This poor fellow wore his cloaths in Mr. Shaw's service, who had the *immorality* to defraud him

of his wages, of which he has never yet received one shilling. Mr. Shaw's pretence for this fraud was, that the servant lost a pair of stockings out of his pocket, in passing to one of the isles.

But it is now high time, to dismiss this disagreeable subject. The strictures, I have made, may perhaps be thought severe, though just. But our author, by infamously traducing the characters of others, deprived himself of every kind of title to any lenity with respect to his own. His disregard to that common veracity, which prudence suggests, where principle fails, has been detected, exposed, and deservedly reprobated, in the course of these pages. If the language used has been sometimes harsh, the reader must ascribe that circumstance to a warmth of temper, in which an honest indignation rises against every breach of truth.

Mr. Shaw merits nothing, perhaps, beyond a contemptuous silence, or, at most, that pointed ridicule, which cuts deeper than serious refutation. But, had I even any talents for the former, the latter had become necessary, as I was grossly and publicly attacked by a man, to whom I had been civil, if not friendly, in private life.

Con-

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F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

E P I C P O E M.

BOOK I.

F I N G A L



E F C P O L M

BOOK I

A R G U M E N T to B O O K A

Cuchullin, (general of the Irish tribes, in the minority of Cormac, king of Ireland) sitting alone beneath a tree, at the gate of Turra, a castle of Ulster, (the other chiefs having gone on a hunting party to Cromla, a neighbouring hill) is informed of the landing of Swaran, king of Lochlin, by Moran, the son of Fithil, one of his scouts. He convenes the chiefs; a council is held, and disputes run high about giving battle to the enemy. Connal, the petty king of Togorma, and an intimate friend of Cuchullin, was for retreating, till Fingal, king of those Caledonians who inhabited the north-west coast of Scotland, whose aid had been previously solicited, should arrive: but Calmar, the son of Matha, lord of Lara, a country in Connaught, was for engaging the enemy immediately. — Cuchullin, of himself willing to fight, went into the opinion of Calmar. Marching towards the enemy, he missed three of his bravest heroes, Fergus, Duchomar, and Caithbar. Fergus arriving, tells Cuchullin of the death of the two other chiefs; which introduces the affecting episode of Mor-na, the daughter of Cormac. — The army of Cuchullin is descried at a distance by Swaran,

ARGUMENT to Book I.

Swaran, who sent the son of Arno to observe the motions of the enemy, while he himself ranged his forces in order of battle. — The son of Arno returning to Swaran, describes to him Cuchullin's chariot, and the terrible appearance of that hero. The armies engage, but night coming on, leaves the victory undecided. Cuchullin, according to the hospitality of the times, sends to Swaran a formal invitation to a feast, by his bard Carril, the son of Kinfena. — Swaran refuses to come. Carril relates to Cuchullin the story of Grudar and Brassolis. A party, by Connal's advice, is sent to observe the enemy; which closes the action of the first day.

FINGAL,

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT EPIC POEM

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK I.

CUCHULLIN (i) sat by Tura's wall;
by the tree of the rustling leaf. — — —
His spear leaned against the mossy rock. His
shield lay by him on the grass. As he thought

(i) Cuchullin, or rather Cuth-Ullin, the voice of Ullin, a poetical name given the son of Semo by the bards, from his commanding the forces of the Province of Ulster against the Ferbolg or Belgæ, who were in possession of Connaught. Cuchullin when very young married Bragela the daughter of Sorglan, and passing over into Ireland, lived for some time with Connal, grandson by a daughter to Congal the petty king of Ulster. His wisdom and valour in a short time gained him such reputation, that in the minori-

of mighty Carbar (2), a hero whom he slew in war; the scout (3) of the ocean came, Moran (4) the son of Fithil.

Rise

ry of Cormac the supreme king of Ireland, he was chosen guardian to the young king, and sole manager of the war against Swaran king of Lochlin. After a series of great actions he was killed in battle somewhere in Connaught, in the twenty-seventh year of his age. He was so remarkable for his strength, that to describe a strong man it has passed into a proverb. "He has the strength of Cuchullin." They shew the remains of his palace at Duniscaich in the Isle of Skye; and a stone, to which he bound his dog Luath, goes still by his name.

(2) Cairbar or Cairbre signifies a strong man.

(3) We may conclude from Cuchullin's applying so early for foreign aid, that the Irish were not then so numerous as they have since been; which is a great presumption against the high antiquities of that people. We have the testimony of Tacitus, that one legion only was thought sufficient, in the time of Agricola, to reduce the whole island under the Roman yoke; which would not probably have been the case, had the Island been inhabited for any number of centuries before.

(4) Moran signifies many; and Fithil, or rather Fili, an inferior bard.

Rise, said the youth, Cuchullin, rise; I see the ships of Swaran. Cuchullin, many are the foe: many the heroes of the dark-rolling sea.

Moran! replied the blue-eyed chief, thou ever tremblest, son of Fithil. Thy fears have much increased the foe. Perhaps it is the king (5) of the lonely hills, coming to aid me on green Ullin's plains.

I saw their chief, says Moran, tall as a rock of ice. His spear is like that blasted fir. His shield like the rising moon. He sat on a rock on the shore: his dark host rolled, like clouds, around him. - - - Many, chief of men! I said, many are our hands of war. - -

Well

(5) Fingal the son of Comhal, and Morna the daughter of Thaddu. His grandfather was Trathal, and great grandfather Trenmor, both of whom are often mentioned in the poem. — Trenmor, according to tradition, had two sons; Trathal, who succeeded him in the Kingdom of Morven, and Conar, called by the bards *Conar the great*, who was elected king of all Ireland, and was the ancestor of that Cormac who sat on the Irish throne when the invasion of Swaran happened. It may not be improper here to observe, that the accent ought always to be placed on the last syllable of Fingal.

Well art thou named, the Mighty Man, but many mighty men are seen from Tura's windy walls. . . . He answered like a wave on a rock, who in this land appears like me? Heroes stand not in my presence: they fall to earth beneath my hand. None can meet Swaran in the fight but Fingal, king of stormy hills. Once we wrestled on the heath of Malmor, (6) and our heels overturned the wood. Rocks fell from their place; and rivulets, changing their course, fled murmuring from our strife. Three days we renewed our strife, and heroes stood at a distance and trembled. On the fourth, Fingal says, that the king of the ocean fell; but Swaran says, he stood. Let dark Cuchullin yield to him that is strong as the storms of Malmor.

No: replied the blue-eyed chief, I will never yield to man. Dark Cuchullin will be great or dead. Go, Fithil's son, and take my spear: strike the sounding shield of Cabait. (7) It

(6) Meal-mór — a great bill.

(7) Cabait, or rather Cathbait, grandfather to the hero, was so remarkable for his valour, that his shield was made use of to alarm his posterity to the battles of the family. We find Fingal making

It hangs at Tura's rustling gate; 'sound of peace is not its voice. My heroes shall hear on the hill.

He went and struck the bossy shield. The hills and their rocks replied. The sound spread along the wood: deer start by the lake of roes. Curach (8) leapt from the sounding rock; and Connal of the bloody spear. Crugal's (9) breast of snow beats high. The son of Favi leaves the dark-brown hind. It is the shield of war, said Ronnar, the spear of Cuchullin, said Lugar. - - - Son of the sea, put on thy arms! Calmar, lift thy sounding steel! Puno! horrid hero, rise: Cairbar, from thy red tree of Cromla. Bend thy white knee, O Eth; and descend from the streams of Lena. — Ca-olt, stretch thy white side, as thou movest along the whistling heath of Mora: thy side that is white as the foam of the troubled sea,

when

ing the same use of his own shield, in the 4th book. — A horn was the most common instrument to call the army together, before the invention of bagpipes.

(8) Cu-raoch signifies *the madness of battle*.

(9) Cruth-geal — *fair-complexioned*.

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when the dark winds pour it on the murmuring rocks of Cuthon. (10)

Now I behold the chiefs in the pride of their former deeds; their souls are kindled at the battles of old, and the actions of other times. Their eyes are like flames of fire, and roll in search of the foes of the land. — Their mighty hands are on their swords; and lightning pours from their sides of steel. — They came like streams from the mountains; each rushed roaring from his hill. Bright are the chiefs of battle in the armour of their fathers. — Gloomy and dark their heroes followed, like the gathering of the rainy clouds behind the red meteors of heaven. — The sounds of crashing arms ascend. The grey dogs howl between. Unequally bursts the song of battle; and rocking Cromla (11) echoes round. On Lena's dusky heath they stood, like mist (12) that shades the hills of autumn,

when

(10) Cu-thón — *the mournful sound of waves.*

(11) Crom-leach signified a place of worship among the Druids. It is here the proper name of a hill on the coast of Ullin or Ulster.

(12) — νεφέλῃσιν εἰκότες ἄσε Κρονίων
 Νηνεμίης, ἔσησεν ἐπ' ἀκροπολοισιν ὄρεσσι
 Ατρείμας.

HOM. II. 5. v. 522.

So

when broken and dark it settles high, and lifts
its head to heaven.

Hail, said Cuchullin, sons of the narrow
vales; hail, ye hunters of the deer. Another
sport is drawing near: it is like the dark rol-
ling of that wave on the coast. Shall we fight,
ye sons of war! or yield green Innisfail (1)
to Lochlin? — O Connal (2) speak, thou
first of men! thou breaker of the shields!
thou hast often fought with Lochlin; wilt thou
lift thy father's spear?

Cuchullin! calm the chief replied, the
spear of Connal is keen. It delights to shine
in

So when th' embattled clouds in dark array,
Along the skies their gloomy lines display;
The low-hung vapours motionless and still
Rest on the summits of the shaded hill. POPE.

(1) Ireland so called from a colony that settled there, called Falans. — Innis-fail, i. e. the Island of the Fa-il or Falans.

(2) Connal, the friend of Cuchullin, was the son of Cathbait, prince of Tongorma or the *island of blue waves*, probably one of the Hebrides. His mother was Fioncoma the daughter of Congal. He had a son by Foba of Conachar-neffar, who was afterwards king of Ulster. For his

in battle, and to mix with the blood of thousands. But tho' my hand is bent on war, my heart is for the peace of Erin. (3) Behold, thou first in Cormac's war, the fable fleet of Swaran. His masts are as numerous on our coast, as reeds in the lake of Lego. His ships are like forests cloathed with mist, when the trees yield by turns to the squally wind. Many are his chiefs in battle. Connal is for peace. — Fingal would shun his arm, the first of mortal men: Fingal that scatters the mighty, as stormy winds the heath; when the streams roar thro' ecchoing Cona: and night settles with all her clouds on the hill.

Fly,

services in the war against Swaran, he had lands conferred on him, which, from his name, were called Tir-chonnail or Tir-connel, *i. e.* the land of Connal.

(3) Erin, a name of Ireland; from *ear* or *iar* West, and *in* an island. This name was not always confined to Ireland, for there is the highest probability, that the *Ierne* of the ancients was Britain to the North of the Forth. — For *Ierne* is said to be to the North of Britain, which could not be meant of Ireland.

AN EPIC POEM

99

Fly, thou chief of peace, said Calmar, (4)
the son of Matha; Fly, Connal, to thy silent
hills, where the spear of battle never shone;
pursue the dark-brown deer of Cromla: and
stop with thine arrows the bounding roes of
Lena. But, blue-eyed son of Semo, Cuchul-
lin, ruler of the war, scatter thou the sons of
Lochlin (5), and roar thro' the ranks of their
pride. Let no vessel of the kingdom of Snow
bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inis-to-
re (6). O ye dark winds of Erin rise! roar
ye whirlwinds of the heath! Amidst the tem-
pest let me die, torn in a cloud by angry
ghosts of men; amidst the tempest let Calmar
die, if ever chace was sport to him so much
as the battle of shields.

Calmar! flow replied the chief, I never
fled, O Matha's son. I was swift with my
friends in battle, but small is the fame of
Connal. The battle was won in my presence,
and

(4) Cálma-er, a strong man.

(5) The Galic name of Scandinavia in general; in a
more confined sense that of the peninsula of Jut-
land.

(6) Innis-tore, the Island of whales, the ancient
name of the Orkney islands.

and the valiant overcame. But, son of Semo, hear my voice, regard the ancient throne of Cormac. Give wealth and half the land for peace, till Fingal come with battle. Or, if war be thy choice, I lift the sword and spear. My joy shall be in the midst of thousands, and my soul brighten in the gloom of the fight.

To me, Cuchullin replies, pleasant is the noise of arms: pleasant as the thunder of heaven before the shower of Spring. But gather all the shining tribes, that I may view the sons of war. Let them move along the heath, bright as the sun-shine before a storm; when the west wind collects the clouds, and the oaks of Morven eccho along the shore.

But where are my friends in battle? The companions of my arm in danger? Where art thou, whitebosom'd Cathbat? Where is that cloud in war, Duchomar [7]? and hast thou left me, ó Fergus [8]! in the day of the storm? Fergus, first in our joy at the feast! son of Rossa! arm of death! comest thou like a

roe

[7] Dubhchomar, *a blak well-shaped man.*

[8] Fear-guth, — *the man of the word; or a commander of army.*

roe [9] from Malmor? Like a hart from the
echoing hills? — Hail thou son of Rossa!
what shades the soul of war?

Four stones [10], replied the chief, rise
on the grave of Cathbat. — These hands
have laid in earth Duchomar, that cloud in
war. Cathbat, thou son of Torman, thou wert
a sun-beam on the hill. — And thou, O
valiant Duchomar, like the mist of marshy La-
no; when it sails over the plains of autumn
and brings death to the people. Morna, thou
fairest of maids! calm is thy sleep in the cave
of the rock. Thou hast fallen in darkness like

a

[9] Be thou like a roe or young hart on the moun-
tains of Bether. SALOMON'S Song.

[10] This passage alludes to the manner of burial
among the ancient Scots. They opened a grave
six or eight feet deep: the bottom was lined
with fine clay; and on this they laid the body
of the deceased, and, if a warrior, his sword,
and the heads of twelve arrows by his side.
Above they laid another stratum of clay, in
which they placed the horn of a deer, the sym-
bol of hunting. The whole was covered with
a fine mold, and four stones placed on end, to
mark the extent of the grave. These are the
four stones alluded to here.

a star, that shoots athwart the desert, when the traveller is alone, and mourns the transient beam.

Say, said Semo's blue-eyed son, say how fell the chiefs of Erin? Fell they by the sons of Lochlin, striving in the battle of heroes? Or what confines the chiefs of Cromla to the dark and narrow house [11]?

Cathbat, replied the hero, fell by the sword of Duchomar, at the oak of the noisy streams. Duchomar came to Tura's cave, and spoke to the lovely Morna.

Morna [12], fairest among women, lovely daughter of Cormac-cairbar. Why in the circle of stones; in the cave of the rock alone? The stream murmurs hoarsely. The old tree's groan is in the wind. The lake is troubled before thee, and dark are the clouds of the sky. But thou art like snow on the heath; and thy hair like the mist of Cromla; when it curls on the rocks, and shines to the beam of the west. — Thy breasts are like two

[11] The grave. — The house appointed for all living. JOB.

[12] Muirne or Morna, a woman beloved by all.

two smooth rocks seen from Branno of the streams. Thy arms like two white pillars in the halls of the mighty Fingal.

From whence, the white-armed maid replied, from whence Duchomar, the most gloomy of men? Dark are thy brows and terrible, Red are thy rolling eyes. Does Swaran appear on the sea? What of the foe, Duchomar?

From the hill I return, O Morna, from the hill of the dark-brown hinds. Three have I slain with my bended yew. Three with my long bounding dogs of the chace. — Lovely daughter of Cormac, I love thee as my soul. — I have slain one stately deer for thee. — High was his branchy head; and fleet his feet of wind.

Duchomar! calm the maid replied, I love thee not, thou gloomy man. — Hard is thy heart of rock, and dark thy terrible brow. But Cathbat, thou son of Torman [1], thou art the love of Morna. Thou art like a sun-beam on the hill in the day of the gloomy storm. Sawest thou the son of Torman, lovely on the hill of his hinds? Here the daughter of Cormac waits the coming of Cathbat.

And

[1] Torman, *Thunder*. This is the true origin of the Jupiter Taramis of the Ancients.

And long shall Morna wait, Duchomar
said, his blood is on my sword. — Long
shall Morna wait for him. He fell at Branno's
stream. High on Cromla I will raise his tomb,
daughter of Cormac-cairbar; but fix thy love
on Duchomar, his arm is strong as a storm. —

And is the son of Torman fallen? said the
maid of the tearful eye. Is he fallen on his
echoing heath; the youth with the breast of
snow? he that was first in the chase of the
hill; the foe of the strangers of the ocean! —
Duchomar, thou art dark [2] indeed, and cruel
is thy arm to Morna. But give me that sword,
my foe; I love the blood of Caithbat. —

He gave the sword to her tears; but she
pierced his manly breast. He fell, like the
bank of a mountain-stream; stretched out his
arm, and said. —

Daughter of Cormac-cairbar, thou hast
slain Duchomar. The sword is cold in my
breast; Morna, I feel it cold. Give me to
Moina [3] the maid; Duchomar was the
dream of her night. She will raise my tomb;
and the hunter shall see it and praise me. But draw
the sword from my breast; Morna, the steel is cold.

She

[2] She alludes to his name — *the dark man*.

[3] Moina, *soft in temper and person*.

She came, in all her tears, she came, and drew it from his breast. He pierced her white side with steel; and spread her fair locks on the ground. Her bursting blood sounds from her side: and her white arm is stained with red. Rolling in death she lay, and Tura's cave answered to her groans. —

Peace, said Cuchullin, to the souls of the heroes; their deeds were great in danger. Let them ride around [4] me on clouds; and shew their features of war: that my soul may be strong in danger; my arm like the thunder of heaven. — But be thou on a moon-beam, ó Morna, near the window of my rest; when my thoughts are of peace; and the din of arms is over. — Gather the strength of the tribes, and move to the wars of Erin. — Attend the car of my battles; rejoice in the noise of my course. — Place three spears by my side; follow the bounding of my steeds; that my soul may be strong in my friends, when the battle darkens round the beams of my steel.

As

[4] It was the opinion then, as indeed it is to this day, of some of the Highlanders, that the souls of the deceased hovered round their living friends; and sometimes appeared to them, when they were about to enter on any great undertaking.

As rushes a stream [5] of foam from the dark shady steep of Cromla; when the thunder is rolling above, and dark-brown night on half the hill. So fierce, so vast, so terrible rushed on the sons of Erin. The chief like a whale of ocean, whom all his billows follow, poured valour forth—as a stream, rolling his might along the shore.

The sons of Lochlin heard the noise as the sound of a winter-stream. Swaran struck his bossy shield, and called the son of Arno. What murmur rolls along the hill like the gathered flies of evening? The sons of Innisfail descend, or rustling winds roar in the distant wood. Such is the noise of Gormal before

[5] Ὡς δ' ὅτε χειμαῖροι ποταμοί, κατ' ὄρεσφι
ρέοντες

Ες μισγάγκειαν συμβάλλετον ὀβριμον ὕδωρ,
Κρενῶν ἐκ μεγάλων κοίλης ἔντοσθε χα-
ράδρης. HOM.

As torrents roll encreas'd by numerous rills
With rage impetuous down the ecchoing hills;
Rush to the vales, and pour'd along the plain,
Roar thro' a thousand channels to the main,

POPE.

Aut ubi decursu rapido de montibus altis,
Dant sonitum spumosi amnes, & in æquora currunt,
Quisque suum populatus iter. VIRG.

re the white tops of my waves arise. O son of Arno, ascend the hill and view the dark face of the heath.

He went, and trembling, swift returned. His eyes rolled wildly round. His heart beat high against his side. His words were faltering, broken, slow.

Rise, son of ocean; rise, chief of the dark-brown shields. I see the dark, the mountain-stream of the battle: the deep-moving strength of the sons of Erin — The car, the car of battle comes, like the flame of death; the rapid car of Cuchullin, the noble son of Semo. It bends behind like a wave near a rock; like the golden mist of the heath. Its sides are embossed with stones, and sparkle like the sea round the boat of night. Of polished yew is its beam, and its seat of the smoothest bone. The sides are replenished with spears; and the bottom is the footstool of heroes. Before the right side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The highmaned, broad-breasted, proud, high-leaping, strong steed of the hill. Loud and resounding is his hoof; the spreading of his mane above is like that stream of smoke on the heath. Bright are the sides of the steed, and his name is Sulin-Sifadda.

B

Before

Before the left side of the car is seen the snorting horse. The dark-maned, high-headed, strong hoofed, fleet, bounding son of the hill: his name is Dusronnal among the stormy sons of the sword. — A thousand thongs bind the car on high. Hard polished bits shine in a wreath of foam. Thin thongs, bright-studded with gems, bend on the stately necks of the steeds. — The steeds, that like wreaths of mist fly over the streamy vales. The wildness of deer is in their course, the strength of the eagle descending on her prey. Their noise is like the blast of winter on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal [6].

Within the car is seen the chief; the strong stormy son of the sword; the hero's name is Cuchullin, son of Semo king of shells. His red cheek is like my polished yew. The look of his blue-rolling eye is wide beneath the dark arch of his brow. His hair flies from his head like a flame, as bending forward he wields the spear. Fly, king of ocean, fly; he comes, like a storm, along the streamy vale.

When did I fly, replied the king, from the battle of many spears? When did I fly, son of Arno, chief of the little soul? I met the storm

[6] A hill of Lochlin.

storm of Gormal, when the foam of my waves
 was high; I met the storm of the clouds: and
 shall I fly from a hero? Were it Fingal him-
 self, my soul should not darken before him. —
 Rise to the battle, my thousands; pour round
 me like the echoing main. Gather round the
 bright steel of your king; strong as the rocks
 of my land; that meet the storm with joy,
 and stretch their dark woods to the wind.

As autumn's [7] dark storms pour from
 two echoing hills, towards each other approach-
 ed

[7] The reader may compare this passage with a si-
 milar one in Homer. Iliad. 4. v. 446.

Now shield with shield, with helmet helmet
 clos'd.

To armour armour; lance to lance oppos'd,
 Host against host, with shadowy squadrons drew,
 The sounding darts in iron tempests flew;
 With streaming blood the slipp'ry fields are dy'd,
 And slaughter'd heroes swell the dreadful tide.

POPE.

Statius has very happily imitated Homer.

*Jam clypeus clypeis, umbone repellitur umbō,
 Ense minax ensis, pede pes, & cuspidē cuspis, &c.*

Arms on armour crashing, bray'd
 Horrible discord, and the madding wheels
 Of brazen chariots rag'd, &c. MILTON.

ed the heroes. — As two dark streams from high rocks meet, and mix and roar on the plain; loud, rough and dark in battle meet Lochlin and Innis-fail. Chief mixed his strokes with chief, and man with man; steel, clanging, sounded on steel, helmets are cleft on high. Blood bursts and smoaks around. — Strings twang on the polished yews. Darts rush along the sky. Spears fall like the circles of light, that gild the stormy face of night.

As the troubled noise of the ocean, when roll the waves on high; as the last peal of the thunder of heaven, such is the noise of battle. Though Cormac's hundred bards were there to give the war to song; feeble were the voices of a hundred bards, to send the deaths to future times. For many were the falls of the heroes; and wide poured the blood of the valiant.

Mourn, ye sons of song, the death of the noble Sithallin [8]. — Let the sighs of Fìona rise on the dark heaths of her lovely Ardan. — They fell, like two hinds of the desert, by the hands of the mighty Swaran; when, in the midst of thousands he roared; like the shrill spirit of a storm, that sits dim, on

[8] Sithallin signifies a handsome man; — Fìona, a fair maid; — and Ardan, pride.

on the clouds of Gormal, and enjoys the death of the mariner.

Nor slept thy hand by thy side, chief of the isle of mist [9]; many were the deaths of thine arm, Cuchullin, thou son of Semo. His sword was like the beam of heaven, when it pierces the sons of the vale; when the people are blasted and fall, and all the hills are burning around. — Dusronnal [10] snorted over the bodies of heroes; and Sifadda [11] bathed his hoof in blood. The battle lay behind them, as groves overturned on the desert of Cromla; when the blast has passed the heath, laden with the spirits of night.

Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid of Inistore [12], bend thy fair head
over

[9] The Isle of Sky; not improperly called the *Isle of mist*; as its high hills, which catch the clouds from the western ocean, occasion almost continual rains.

[10] One of Cuchullin's horses. Dubhstron-gheal.

[11] Sith-fadda, *i. e.* a long stride.

[12] The maid of Inistore was the daughter of Gorlo, king of Inistore or Orkney islands. Trenar was brother to the king of Iniscon, supposed to be one of the islands of Shetland. The Orkneys and Shetland were at that time subject to the king of

over the waves, thou fairer than the spirit of the hills; when it moves in a sun-beam at noon over the silence of Morven. He is fallen! thy youth is low; pale beneath the sword of Cuchullin. No more shall valour raise the youth to match the blood of kings. — Trenar, lovely Trenar died, thou maid of Inistore. His gray dogs are howling at home, and see his passing ghost. His bow is in the hall unstrung. No sound is in the heath of his hinds.

As roll a thousand waves to the rocks, so Swaran's host came on; as meets a rock a thousand waves, so Innis-fail met Swaran. Death raises all his voices around, and mixes with the sound of shields. — Each hero is a pillar of darkness, and the sword a beam of fire in his hand. The field echoes from wing to wing, as a hundred hammers, that rise by turns on the red son of the furnace.

Who

Lochlin. We find, that the dogs of Trenar are sensible at home of the death of their master, the very instant he is killed. — It was the opinion of the times, that the souls of heroes went immediately after death to the hills of their country, and the scenes they frequented the most happy time of their life. It was thought too, that dogs and horses saw the ghosts of the deceased.

Who are these on Lena's heath, that are so gloomy and dark? Who are these like two clouds [1], and their swords like lightning above them? The little hills are troubled around, and the rocks tremble with all their moss. — Who is it but Ocean's son and the car-borne chief of Erin? Many are the anxious eyes of their friends, as they see them dim on the heath. Now night conceals the chiefs in her clouds, and ends the terrible fight.

It was on Cromla's shaggy side that Dorglas placed the deer [2], the early fortune of the

[1] As when two black clouds,
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian. MILTON.

[2] The ancient manner of preparing feast after hunting is handed down by tradition. — A pit lined with smooth stones was made; and near it stood a heap of smooth flat stones of the flint kind. The stones as well as the pit were properly heated with heath. Then they laid some venison in the bottom, and a stratum of the stones above it; and thus they did alternately, till the pit was full. The whole was covered over with heath to confine the steam. Whether this is probable, I cannot say, but some pits are shewn, which, the vulgar say, were used in that manner.

the chace, before the heroes left the hill. —
 A hundred youths collect the heath; ten heroes
 blow the fire; three hundred chuse the polish'd
 stones. The feast is smoaking wide.

Cuchullin, chief of Erin's war, resumed
 his mighty soul. He stood upon his beamy
 spear, and spoke to the son of songs; to Carril
 of other times, the gray-haired son of
 Kinfena [3]. Is this feast spread for me alone
 and the king of Lochlin on Ullin's shore, far
 from the deer of his hills, and sounding halls
 of his feasts? Rise, Carril of other times, and
 carry my words to Swaran; tell him that came
 from the roaring of waters, that Cuchullin
 gives his feast. Here let him listen to the
 sound of my groves amidst the clouds of
 night. — For cold and bleak the blustering
 winds rush over the foam of his seas. Here
 let him praise the trembling harp, and hear
 the songs of heroes.

Old Carril went, with softest voice, and
 called the king of dark-brown shields. Rise
 from the skins of thy chace, rise, Swaran
 king of groves. — Cuchullin gives the joy
 of shells; partake the feast of Erin's blue-
 eyed chief.

He

[3] Cean-feana, i. e. the head of the people.

He answered like the sullen sound of Cromla before a storm. Though all thy daughters, Innis-fail! should extend their arms of snow; raise high the heavings of their breasts, and softly roll their eyes of love: yet, fixed as Lochlin's thousand rocks, here Swaran shall remain; till morn, with the young beams of my east, shall light me to the death of Cuchullin. Pleasant to my ear is Lochlin's wind. It rushes over my seas. It speaks aloft in all my shrowds, and brings my green forests to my mind; the green forests of Gormal, that often echoed to my winds, when my spear was red in the chace of the boar. Let dark Cuchullin yield to me the ancient throne of Cormac, or Erin's torrents shall shew from their hills the red foam of the blood of his pride.

Sad is the sound of Swaran's voice, said Carril of other times: —

Sad to himself alone, said the blue-eyed son of Semo. But, Carril, raise thy voice on high, and tell the deeds of other times. Send thou the night away in song; and give the joy of grief. For many heroes and maids of love have moved on Innis-fail. And lovely are the songs of woe, that are heard on Albion's rocks; when the noise of the chace is over,

and the streams of Cona answer to the voice of Offian [4].

In other days [5], Carril replies, came the sons of Ocean to Erin. A thousand vessels bounded over the waves to Ullin's lovely plains. The sons of Innis-fail arose to meet the race of dark-brown shields. Cairbar, first of men, was there, and Grudar, stately youth. Long had they strove for the spotted bull, that lowed on Golbun's [6] echoing heath. Each claimed

[4] Offian, the son of Fingal and author of the poem. One cannot but admire the address of the poet, in putting his own praise so naturally into the mouth of Cuchullin. The Cona here mentioned is perhaps that small river, that runs through Glenco in Argyleshire. One of the hills, which environ that romantic valley, is still called Scornafena, or the hill of Fingal's people.

[5] This episode is introduced with propriety. Calmar and Connal, two of the Irish heroes, had disputed warmly before the battle about engaging the enemy. Carril endeavours to reconcile them with the story of Cairbar and Grudar; who, tho' enemies before, fought *side by side* in the war. The poet obtained his aim, for we find Calmar and Connal perfectly reconciled in the third book.

[6] Golb-bhean, as well as Cromleach, signifies *a crooked hill*. It is here the name of a mountain in the county of Sligo.

ed him as his own; and death was often at the point of their steel.

Side by side the heroes fought, and the strangers of Ocean fled. Whose name was fairer on the hill, than the name of Cairbar and Grudar! — But ah! why ever lowed the bull on Golbun's echoing heath? They saw him leaping like the snow. The wrath of the chiefs returned.

On Lubar's [7] grassy banks they fought; and Grudar, like a sun-beam, fell. Fierce Cairbar came to the vale of the echoing Tura, where Brassolis [8], fairest of his sisters, all alone, raised the song of grief. She sung of the actions of Grudar, the youth of her secret soul. — She mourned him in the field of blood; but still she hoped for his return. Her white bosom is seen from her robe, as the moon from the clouds of night. Her voice was softer than the harp, to raise the song of grief. Her soul was fixed on Grudar; the secret look of her eye was his — When shalt thou come in thine arms, thou mighty in the war? —

Take

[7] Lubar — a river in Ulster. *Labbar*, loud, noisy.

[8] Brassolis signifies a woman with a white breast.

Take, Brassolis, Cairbar came and said, take, Brassolis, this shield of blood. Fix it on high within my hall, the armour of my foe. Her soft heart beat against her side. Distracted, pale, she flew. She found her youth in all his blood; she died on Cromla's heath. Here rests their dust, Cuchullin; and these two lonely yews, sprung from their tombs, wish to meet on high. Fair was Brassolis on the plain, and Grudar on the hill. The bard shall preserve their names, and repeat them to future times.

Pleasant is thy voice, O Carril, said the blue-eyed chief of Erin; and lovely are the words of other times. They are like the calm shower [9] of spring, when the sun looks on the field, and the light cloud flies over the hills. O strike the harp in praise of my love, the lonely sun-beam of Dunscaich. Strike the harp in the praise of Bragela [10], of her that

I

[9] Homer compares soft piercing words to the fall of snow.

— *επει νιφιδεσσιν ἑοικότα χειμῶνιν.*

But when he speaks, what elocution flows!

Like the soft fleeces of descending snows. POPE.

[10] Bragela was the daughter of Sorglan, and the wife of Cuchullin. — Cuchullin, upon the death

I left in the Isle of Mist, the spouse of Semo's son. Dost thou raise thy fair face from the rock, to find the sails of Cuchullin? — The sea is rolling far distant, and its white foam shall deceive thee for my sails. Retire, for it is night, my love; and the dark winds sigh in thy hair. Retire to the halls of my feasts, and think of the times that are past: for I will not return, till the storm of war is ceased. O Connal, speak of wars and arms, and send her from my mind; for lovely with her raven-hair is the white-bosomed daughter of Sorglan.

Connal, slow to speak, replied, Guard against the race of Ocean. Send thy troop of night abroad, and watch the strength of Swaran. — Cuchullin! I am for peace, till the race of the desert come; till Fingal come, the first of men, and beam, like the sun, on our fields.

The death of Artho, supreme king of Ireland, passed over into Ireland, probably by Fingal's order, to take upon him the administration of affairs in that kingdom, during the minority of Cormac the son of Artho. He left his wife Bragela in Dunscach, the seat of the family, in the isle of Sky, where the remains of his palace is still shewn; and a stone, to which he bound his dog Luath, goes still by his name.

The hero struck the shield of his alarms —
 the warriors of the night moved on. The rest
 lay in the heath of the deer, and slept amidst
 the dusky wind. — The ghosts [11] of
 the lately dead were near, and swam on gloomy
 clouds. And far distant, in the dark silence
 of Lena, the feeble voices of death were heard.

FINGAL,

[11] It was long the opinion of the ancient Scots,
 that a ghost was heard shrieking near the place,
 where a death was to happen soon after. The
 accounts given to this day, among the vulgar,
 of this extraordinary matter, are very poetical.
 The ghost comes mounted on a meteor, and
 surrounds twice or thrice the place destined for
 the person to die; and then goes along the road,
 through which the funeral is to pass, shrieking
 at intervals; at last, the meteor and ghost disap-
 pear above the burial place.

F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK II.

ARGUMENT to Book II.

The ghost of Crugal, one of the Irish heroes who was killed in battle, appearing to Connal, foretells the defeat of Cuchullin in the next battle; and earnestly advises him to make peace with Swaran. Connal communicates the vision; but Cuchullin is inflexible; from a principle of honour he would not be the first to sue for peace, and he resolved to continue the war. Morning comes; Swaran proposes dishonorable terms to Cuchullin, which are rejected. The battle begins, and is obstinately fought for some time, until, upon the flight of Grumal, the whole Irish army gave way. Cuchullin and Connal cover their retreat: Carril leads them to a neighbouring hill, whither they are soon followed by Cuchullin himself, who descries the fleet of Fingal making towards the coast; but, night coming on, he lost sight of it again. Cuchullin, dejected after his defeat, attributes his ill success to the death of Ferda his friend, whom he had killed some time before. Carril, to shew, that ill success did not always attend those who innocently killed their friends, introduces the episode of Comal and Galvina.

FIN.

F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

E P I C P O E M

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK II.

CONNAL [I] lay by the fount of the
 mountain stream, beneath the aged tree.
 A stone, with its moss, supported his head.
 Shrill thro' the heath of Lena, he heard the
 voice

[I] The scene of Connal's repose is familiar to those
 who have been in the Highlands of Scotland. The
 poet removes him to a distance from the army,
 to add more horror to the description of Crugal's
 ghost by the loneliness of the place. It perhaps
 will not be disagreeable to the reader, to see how
 two other ancient poets handled a similar subject.

Ἠλθῃ δ' ἐπὶ ψυχῇ Πατροκλῆος δειλοῖο
 Παντ' αὐτῷ μέγεθος τε καὶ ὄματα κατ' εἰδυῖα
 Καὶ φωνὴν, &c. HOM. II. 23.

voice of night. At distance from the heroes
he lay, for the son of the sword feared no foe.

My

When lo! the shade, before his closing eyes,
Of sad Patroclus rose or seem'd to rise,
In the same robe he living wore, he came
In stature, voice, and pleasing look the same.
The form familiar hover'd o'er his head,
And sleeps Achilles thus? the phantom said.

POPE.

*In somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector
Visus adesse mihi, largosque effundere fletus,
Raptatus bigis, ut quondam, aterque cruento
Pulvere, perque pedes trajectus lora tumentes.
Hei mihi qualis erat! quantum mutatus ab illo
Hectore, qui redit exuviiis indutus Achillis
Vel Danaum Phrygios jactulatus puppibus ignes;
Squallentem barbam & concretos sanguine crines,
Vulneraque illa gerens, quæ circum plurima muros
Accepit patrios.*

Æn. lib. 2.

When Hector's ghost before my sight appears:
A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd in tears.
Such as he was, when, by Pelides slain,
Theſſalian courſers drag'd him o'er the plain.
Swoln were his feet, as when the thongs were
thrust

Through the bor'd holes, his body black with duſt.
Unlike that Hector, who return'd from toils
Of war triumphant, in Æacian ſpoils:

Or

My hero saw in his rest a dark-red stream
of fire coming down from the hill. Crugal sat
upon the beam, a chief that lately fell. He
fell by the hand of Swaran; striving in the
battle of heroes. His face is like the beam of
the setting moon; his robes are of the clouds
of the hill; his eyes are like two decaying
flames. Dark is the wound of his breast.

Crugal, said the mighty Connal, son of
Dedgal famed on the hill of deer. Why so
pale and sad, thou breaker of the shields? Thou
hast never been pale for fear. — What
disturbs the son of the hill?

Dim, and in tears, he stood and stretched
his pale hand over the hero. — Faintly he
raised his feeble voice, like the gale of the
reedy Lego.

My ghost, o Connal, is on my native
hills; but my corse is on the sands of Ullin.
Thou shalt never talk with Crugal, or find his
lone steps in the heath. I am light as the
blast of Cromla, and I move like the shadow
of

Or him, who made the fainting Greeks retire,
And launch'd against their navy Phrygian fire.
His hair and beard stood stiffen'd with his gore;
And all the wounds he for his country bore.

of mist. Connal, son of Colgar [2], I see the park cloud of death: it hovers over the plains of Lena. The sons of green Erin shall fall. Remove from the field of ghosts. — Like the darkened moon [3] he retired, in the midst of the whistling blast.

Stay, said the mighty Connal, stay, my dark-red friend. Lay by that beam of heaven, son of the windy Crömla. What cave of the hill is thy lonely house? What green-headed hill is the place of thy rest? Shall we not hear thee in the storm? in the noise of the mountain-stream? When the feeble sons of the wind come forth, and ride on the blast of the desert.

The soft-voiced Connal rose in the midst of his sounding arms. He struck his shield above Cuchullin. The son of battle waked.

Why,

- [2] Connal the son of Caithbar, the friend of Cuchullin, is sometimes, as here, called the son of Colgar; from one of that name who was the founder of his family.

- [3] *Ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς, ἥντε καπνὸς*
Ὡχέτο τετραγυῖα HOM. II. 23, v. 100.
 Like a thin smoke he sees the spirit fly,
 And hears a feeble, lamentable cry. POPE.

Why, said the ruler of the car, comes Connal through the night? My spear might turn against the found? and Cuchullin mourn the death of his friend. Speak, Connal, son of Colgar, speak, thy counsel is like the son of heaven.

Son of Semo, replied the chief; the ghost of Crugal came from the cave of his hill. — The stars dim-twinkled through his form; and his voice was like the sound of a distant stream. — He is a messenger of death. — He speaks of the dark and narrow house. Sue for peace, o Chief of Dunscaich; or fly over the heath of Lena.

He spoke to Connal, replied the hero, though stars dim-twinkled through his form. Son of Colgar, it was the wind that murmured in the caves of Lena. — Or if it was the form [4] of Crugal, why didst thou not force him

[4] The poet teaches us the opinions that prevailed in his time concerning the state of separate souls. From Connal's expression, "That the stars dim-twinkled through the form of Crugal," and Cuchullin's reply, we may gather, that they both thought the soul was material; something like the *εἰδωλον* of the ancient Greeks.

him to my sight. Hast thou enquired where is his cave? the house of the son of the wind? My sword might find that voice, and force his knowledge from him. And small is his knowledge, Connal, for he was here to day. He could not have gone beyond our hills, and who could tell him there of our death?

Ghosts fly on clouds and ride on winds, said Connal's voice of wisdom. They rest together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.

Then let them talk of mortal men; of every man but Erin's chief. Let me be forgot in their cave; for I will not fly from Swaran. — If I must fall, my tomb shall rise amidst the fame of future times. The hunter shall shed a tear on my stone; and sorrow dwell round the high-bosomed Bragéla. I fear not death, but I fear to fly, for Fingal saw me often victorious. Thou dim phantom of the hill, shew thyself to me! come on thy beam of heaven, and shew me my death in thine hand; yet will I not fly, thou feeble son of the wind. Go, son of Colgar, strike the shield of Caithbat, it hangs between the spears. Let my heroes rise to the sound in the midst of the battles of Erin. Though Fingal delays his coming
with

with the race of the stormy hills; we shall fight, o Colgar's son, and die in the battle of heroes.

The sound spreads wide; the heroes rise, like the breaking of a blue-rolling wave. They stood on the heath, like oaks with all their branches round them [5]; when they eccho to the stream of frost, and their withered leaves rustle to the wind.

High Cromla's head of clouds is gray; the morning trembles on the half-enlightened ocean. The blue, gray mist swims slowly by, and hides the sons of Innis-fail.

Rise ye, said the king of the dark-brown shields, ye that came from Lochlin's waves. The sons of Erin have fled from our arms — pursue them over the plains of Lena. — And, Morla, go to Carmac's hall, and bid them yield to Swaran; before the people shall fall into the tomb; and the hills of Ullin be silent.

[5] — As when heaven's fire
Hath scath'd the forest oaks, or mountain pines
With singed tops, their stately growth tho' bare
Stand on the blasted heath. MILTON.

lent. — They rose like a flock of sea-fowl,
when the waves expel them from the shore.
Their sound was like a thousand streams, that
meet in Cona's vale, when after a stormy night,
they turn their dark eddies beneath the pale
light of the morning.

As the dark shades of autumn fly over the
hills of grass; so gloomy, dark, successive came
the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as
the stag of Morven moved on the king of gro-
ves. His shining shield is on his side like a
flame on the heath at night, when the world
is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some
ghost sporting in the beam,

A blast from the troubled ocean removed
the settled mist. The sons of Innis-fail appear
like a ridge of rocks on the shore.

Go, Morla, go, said Lochlin's king, and
offer peace to these. Offer the terms, we give
to kings, when nations bow before us. When
the valiant are dead in war, and the virgins
weeping on the field.

Great Morla came, the son of Swart, and
stately strode the king of shields. He spoke to
Erin's blue-eyed son, among the lesser heroes.

Take

Take Swaran's peace, the warrior spoke,
the peace he gives to kings, when the na-
tions bow before him. Leave Ullin's lovely
plains to us, and give thy spouse and dog.
Thy spouse high-bosom'd heaving fair. Thy
dog that overtakes the wind. Give these to
prove the weakness of thine arm, and live be-
neath our power.

Tell Swaran, tell that heart of pride, that
Cuchullin never yields. — I give him the
dark-blue rolling of ocean, or I give his people
graves in Erin! Never shall a stranger have
the lovely sun-beam of Dunscaich; nor ever
deer fly on Lochlin's hills before the nimble-
footed Luäth.

Vain ruler of the car, said Morla, wilt
thou fight the king; that king whose ships of
many groves could carry off thine Isle? So lit-
tle is thy green-hilled Ullin to the king of
stormy waves.

In words I yield to many, Morla; but this
sword shall yield to none. Erin shall own the
sway of Cormac, while Connal and Cuchullin
live. O Connal, first of mighty men, thou
hast heard the words of Morla; shall thy
thoughts then be of peace, thou breaker of
the shields? Spirit of fallen Crugal! why didst

thou threaten us with death? The narrow house shall receive me in the midst of the light of renown. — Exalt, ye sons of Innis-fail, exalt the spear and bend the bow; rush on the foe in darkness, as the spirits of stormy nights.

Then dismal, roaring, fierce, and deep the gloom of battle rolled along; as mist [6] that is poured on the valley, when storms invade the silent sun-shine of heaven. The chief moves before in arms, like an angry ghost before a cloud; when meteors inclose him with fire; and the dark winds are in his hand. — Carril, far on the heath, bids the horn of battle sound. He raises the voice of the song, and pours his soul into the minds of heroes.

Where, said the mouth of the song, where is the fallen Crugal? He lies forgot on earth, and the hall of shells [7] is silent. — Sad is the spouse of Crugal, for she is a stranger

[6] — As evening mist

Ris'n from a river o'er the marsh glides,
And gathers ground fast at the lab'or's heel
Homeward returning.

MILTON.

[7] The ancient Scots, as well as the present Highlanders, drunk in shells; hence it is that we so often meet, in the old poetry, with the *chief of shells*, and the *balls of shells*.

ger [8] in the hall of her sorrow. But who is she, that, like a sun-beam, flies before the ranks of the foe? It is Degrena [9], lovely fair, the spouse of fallen Crugal. Her hair is on the wind behind. Her eye is red; her voice is shrill. Green, empty is thy Crugal now, his form is in the cave of the hill. He comes to the ear of rest, and raises his feeble voice; like the humming of the mountain-bee, or collected flies of evening. But Degrena falls like a cloud of the morn; the sword of Lochlin is in her side. Cairbar, she is fallen, the rising-thought of thy youth. She is fallen, o Cairbar, the thought of thy youth-ful hours.

Fierce Cairbar heard the mournful sound, and rushed on like ocean's whale; he saw the death of his daughter; and roared in the midst of thousands [10]. His spear met a son of Lochlin, and battle spread from wing to wing. As a hundred winds in Lochlin's groves, as fire

[8] Crugal had married Degrena but a little time before the battle, consequently she may with propriety be called a stranger in the hall of her sorrow.

[9] Deo-ghréna signifies a *sun-beam*.

[10] *Mediisque in millibus ardet.*

VING.

fire in the firs of a hundred hills; so loud, so ruinous and vast the ranks of men are hewn down. — Cuchullin cut off heroes like thistles, and Swaran wasted Erin. Curach fell by his hand, and Cairbar of the bossy shield. Morglan lies in lasting rest; and Ca-olt quivers as he dies. His white breast is stained with his blood; and his yellow hair stretched in the dust of his native land. He often had spread the feast where he fell; and often raised the voice of the harp: when his dogs leapt around for joy; and the youths of the chase prepared the bow.

Still Swaran advanced, as a stream that bursts from the desert. The little hills are rolled in its course; and the rocks half-sunk by its side. But Cuchullin stood before him like a hill [11], that catches the clouds of heaven.

[11] Virgil and Milton have made use of a comparison similar to this; I shall lay both before the reader, and let him judge for himself, which of these two great poets have best succeeded.

*Quantus Athos, aut quantus Eryx, aut ipse coruscis
Cum fremit ilicibus, quantus gaudetque nivali
Vertice se attollens pater Appenninus ad auras.*

Like

ven. — The winds contend on its head of pines; and the hail rattles on its rocks. But, firm in its strength, it stands and shades the silent vale of Cona.

So Cuchullin shaded the sons of Erin, and stood in the midst of thousands. Blood rises like the fount of a rock, from panting heroes around him. But Erin falls on either wing, like snow in the day of the sun.

O sons of Innis-fail, said Grumal, Lochlin conquers on the field. Why strive we as reeds against the wind? Fly to the hill of dark-brown hinds. He fled like the stag of Morven, and his spear is a trembling beam of light behind him. Few fled with Grumal, the chief
of

Like Eryx or like Athos great he shews,
Or father Appenine when white with snows;
His head divine obscure in clouds he hides,
And shakes the sounding forest on his sides.

DRYDEN.

On th' other side Satan alarm'd,
Collecting all his might, dilated stood
Like Teneriff or Atlas unremov'd;
His stature reach'd the sky.

MILTON.

of the little soul: they fell in the battle of heroes on Lena's echoing heath.

High on his car, of many gems, the chief of Erin stood; he slew a mighty son of Lochlin, and spoke, in haste, to Connal. O Connal, first of mortal men, thou hast taught this arm of death! Though Erin's sons have fled, shall we not fight the foe? O Carril, son of other times, carry my living friends to that bushy hill. — Here, Connal, let us stand like rocks, and save our flying friends.

Connal mounts the car of light. They stretch their shields like the darkened moon, the daughter of the starry skies, when she moves, a dun circle, through heaven. Sithfadda panted up the hill, and Dusronnel haughty steed. Like waves behind a whale, behind them rushed the foe.

Now on the rising side of Cromla stood Erin's few sad sons; like a grove, through which the flame had rushed, hurried on by the winds of the stormy night. — Cuchullin stood beside an oak. He rolled his red eye in silence, and heard the wind in his bushy hair; when
the

the scout of ocean came, Moran the son of Fithil. — The ships, he cried, the ships of the lonely isle ! There Fingal comes, the first of men, the breaker of the shields. The waves foam before his black prows. His masts with sails are like groves in clouds.

Blow, said Cuchullin, all ye winds that rush over my isle of lovely mist. Come to the death of thousands, o chief of the hills of hinds. Thy sails, my friend, are to me like the clouds of the morning; and thy ships like the light of heaven; and thou thyself like a pillar of fire that gives light in the night. O Connal, first of men, how pleasant are our friends ! But the night is gathering around; where now are the ships of Fingal? Here let us pass the hours of darkness, and wish for the moon of heaven.

The winds came down on the woods. The torrents rushed from the rocks. Rain gathered round the head of Cromla. And the red stars trembled between the flying clouds. Sad, by the side of a stream, whose sound was echoed by a tree, sad by the side of a stream
the

the chief of Erin sat. Connal son of Colgar was there, and Carril of other times.

Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin, said the son of Semo, unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin, since he slew his friend. — Ferda, thou son of Damman, I loved thee as myself.

How, Cuchullin, son of Semo, fell the breaker of the shields? Well I remember, said Connal, the noble son of Damman. Tall and fair he was like the rain-bow of the hill.

Ferda from Albin came, the chief of a hundred hills. In Muri's [12] hall he learned the sword, and won the friendship of Cuchullin

[12] Muri, say the Irish bards, was an academy in Ulster for teaching the use of arms. The signification of the word is a *cluster of people*; which renders the opinion probable. Cuchullin is said to have been the first who introduced into Ireland complete armour of steel. He is famous, among the Senachies, for teaching horsemanship to the Irish, and for being the first who used a chariot in that kingdom; which last circumstance was the occasion of Ossian's being so circumstantial in his description of Cuchullin's car, in the first book.

lin. We moved to the chace together; and
one was our bed in the heath.

Deugala was the spouse of Cairbar, chief
of the plains of Ullin. She was covered with
the light of beauty, but her heart was the
house of pride. She loved that sun-beam of
youth, the noble son of Damman. Cairbar,
said the white-armed woman, give me half of
the herd. No more I will remain in your
halls. Divide the herd, dark Cairbar.

Let Cuchullin, said Cairbar, divide my
herd on the hill. His breast is the seat of ju-
stice. Depart, thou light of beauty. — I
went and divided the herd. One snow-white
bull remained. I gave that bull to Cairbar.
The wrath of Deugala rose.

Son of Damman, begun the fair, Cuchul-
lin pains my soul. I must hear of his death,
or Lubar's stream shall roll over me. My pale
ghost shall wander near thee, and mourn the
wound of my pride. Pour out the blood of
Cuchullin, or pierce this heaving breast.

D

Deugala,

Deugala, said the fair-haired youth, how shall I slay the son of Semo? He is the friend of my secret thoughts, and shall I lift the sword? She wept three days before him, on the fourth he consented to fight.

I will fight my friend, Deugala! but may I fall by his sword. Could I wander on the hill and behold the grave of Cuchullin? We fought on the hills of Muri. Our swords avoid a wound. They slide on the helmets of steel; and sound on the slippery shields. Deugala was near with a smile, and said to the son of Damman, thine arm is feeble, thou sun-beam of youth. Thy years are not strong for steel. — Yield to the son of Semo, he is like the rock of Malinor.

The tear is in the eye of youth. He faltering said to me, Cuchullin, raise thy bossy shield. Defend thee from the hand of thy friend. My soul is laden with grief: for I must slay the chief of men.

I sighed as the wind in the chink of a rock. I lifted high the edge of my steel. The sun-

Unhappy is the hand of Cuchullin, since
the hero fell.

Comal was a son of Albin; the chief of an hundred hills. His deer drunk of a thousand streams. A thousand rocks replied to the voice of his dogs. His face was the mildness of youth. His hand the death of heroes. One was his love, and fair was she! the daughter of mighty Conloch. She appeared like a sun-beam among women. And her hair was like the wing of the raven. Her dogs were taught to the chase. Her bow-string sounded on the winds of the forest. Her soul was fixed on Comal. Often met their eyes of love. Their course in the chase was one, and happy were

D 2

their

their words in secret. — But Grumal loved the maid, the dark chief of the gloomy Arden. He watched her lone steps in the heath; the foe of unhappy Comal.

One day, tired of the chase, when the mist had concealed their friends, Comal and the daughter of Conloch met in the cave of Ronan [1]. It was the wonted haunt of Comal. Its sides were hung with his arms. A hundred shields of thongs were there; a hundred helms of founding steel.

Rest here, he said, my love Galvina; thou light of the cave of Ronan. A deer appears
on

- [1] The unfortunate death of this Ronan is the subject of the ninth fragment of ancient poetry published last year; it is not the work of Ossian, though it is writ in his manner, and bears the genuine marks of antiquity. — The concise expressions of Ossian are imitated, but the thoughts are too jejune and confined, to be the production of that poet. — Many poems go under his name, that have been evidently composed since his time; they are very numerous in Ireland, and some have come to the translator's hands. They are trivial and dull to the last degree; swelling into ridiculous bombast, or sinking into the lowest kind of prosaic style.

on Mora's brow. I go; but I will soon return.
I fear, she said, dark Grumal my foe; he
haunts the cave of Ronan. I will rest among
the arms; but soon return, my love.

He went to the deer of Mora. The daughter of Conloch would try his love. She clothed her white sides with his armour, and strode from the cave of Ronan. He thought it was his foe. His heart beat high. His colour changed, and darkness dimmed his eyes. He drew the bow. The arrow flew. Galvina fell in blood. He run with wildness in his steps and called the daughter of Conloch. No answer in the lonely rock. Where art thou, o my love! He saw, at length, her heaving heart beating around the feathered dart. O Conloch's daughter, is it thou? He sunk upon her breast.

The hunters found the hapless pair; he afterwards walked the hill. But many and silent were his steps round the dark dwelling of his love. The fleet of the ocean came. He fought; the strangers fled. He searched for his death over the field. But who could kill the mighty Comal! He threw away his dark-brown shield.

An arrow found his manly breast. He sleeps
with his loved Galvina at the noise of the
founding furge. Their green tombs are seen
by the mariner, when he bounds on the
waves of the north,

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK III.

ARGUMENT to BOOK III.

Cuchullin, pleased with the story of Carril, insists with that bard for more of his songs. He relates the actions of Fingal in Lochlin, and the death of Agandecca the beautiful sister of Swaran. He had scarce finished, when Calmar the son of Matha, who had advised the first battle, came wounded from the field, and told them of Swaran's design to surprise the remains of the Irish army. He himself proposes to withstand singly the whole force of the enemy, in a narrow pass, till the Irish should make good their retreat. Cuchullin, touched with the gallant proposal of Calmar, resolves to accompany him, and orders Carril to carry off the few that remained of the Irish. Morning comes, Calmar dies of his wounds; and, the ships of the Caledonians appearing, Swaran gives over the pursuit of the Irish, and returns to oppose Fingal's landing. Cuchullin ashamed, after his defeat, to appear before Fingal, retires to the cave of Tura. Fingal engages the enemy, puts them to flight; but the coming on of night makes the victory not decisive. The king, who had observed the gallant behaviour of his grandson Oscar, gives him advices concerning his conduct in peace

ARGUMENT to Book III.

peace and war. He recommends to him, to place the example of his fathers before his eyes, as the best model for his conduct; which introduces the episode concerning Fainasollis, the daughter of the king of Craca, whom Fingal had taken under his protection, in his youth. Fillan and Oscar are dispatched to observe the motions of the enemy by night; Gaul the son of Morni desires the command of the army, in the next battle; which Fingal promises to give him. Some general reflections of the poet close the third day.

F I N G A L ,

AN ANCIENT

E P I C P O E M

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK III. (1)

Pleasant are the words of the song, said Cuchullin, and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the calm dew of the morning on the hill of roes, when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale. O Carril, raise again thy voice, and let me hear the song of Tura; which was sung in my halls of joy, when Fingal king of shields was there, and glowed at the deeds of his fathers. Fin-

- [1] The second night, since the opening of the poem, continues; and Cuchullin, Connal, and Carril still sit in the place described in the preceding book. The story of Agandecca is introduced here with propriety, as great use is made of it in the course of the poem, and as it, in some measure, brings about the catastrophe.

Fingal! thou man of battle, said Carril,
early were thy deeds in arms. Lochlin was con-
sumed in thy wrath, when thy youth strove
with the beauty of maids. They smiled at the
fair-blooming face of the hero; but death was
in his hands. He was strong as the waters of
Lora. His followers were like the roar of a
thousand streams. They took the king of Loch-
lin in battle, but restored him to his ships.
His big heart swelled with pride; and the
death of the youth was dark in his soul. —
For none ever, but Fingal, overcame the
strength of the mighty Starno [2].

He sat in the halls of his shells in Loch-
lin's woody land. He called the grey-haired
Snivan, that often sung round the circle [3]
of Loda: when the stone of power heard his cry,
and the battle turned in the field of the valiant.

Go,

[2] Starno was the father of Swaran as well as Agan-
decca. — His fierce and cruel character is
well marked in other poems concerning the times.

[3] This passage most certainly alludes to the religion
of Lochlin, and *the stone of power* here mention-
ed is the image of one of the deities of Scanda-
navia.

Go, gray-haired Snivan, Starno said, to
Ardven's sea-surrounded rocks. Tell to Fingal
king of the desert, he that is the fairest among
his thousands, tell him, I give him my daugh-
ter, the loveliest maid that ever heaved a breast
of snow. Her arms are white as the foam of
my waves. Her soul is generous and mild.
Let him come with his bravest heroes to the
daughter of the secret hall.

Snivan came to Albin's windy hills: and
fair-haired Fingal went. His kindled soul flew
before him, as he bounded on the waves of the
north.

Welcome, said the dark-brown Starno,
welcome, king of rocky Morven; and ye his
heroes of might, sons of the lonely isle! Three
days within my halls shall ye feast; and three
days pursue my boars, that your fame may
reach the maid that dwells in the secret hall.

The king of snow [4] designed their
death, and gave the feast of shells. Fingal,
who

[4] Starno is here poetically called the king of snow,
from the great quantities of snow that fall in his
dominions.

who doubted the foe, kept on his arms of steel.
The sons of death were afraid, and fled from
the eyes of the hero. The voice of sprightly
mirth arose. The trembling harps of joy are
strung. Bards sing the battle of heroes; or the
heaving breast of love. — Ullin, Fingal's
bard, was there; the sweet voice of the hill of
Cona. He praised the daughter of snow; and
Morven's [5] high-descended chief. — The
daughter of snow over-heard, and left the hall
of her secret sigh. She came in all her beauty,
like the moon from the cloud of the east. —
Loveliness was around her as light. Her steps
were like the music of songs. She saw the
youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh
of her soul. Her blue eye rolled on him in
secret: and she blest the chief of Morven.

The third day, with all its beams, shone
bright on the wood of boars. Forth moved the
dark-browed Sterno; and Fingal, king of
shields. Half the day they spent in the chase;
and

[5] All the North-west coast of Scotland probably
went of old under the name of Morven, which
signifies a ridge of very high hills.

and the spear of Fingal was red in the blood of Gormal [6].

It was then the daughter of Starno, with blue eyes rolling in tears, came with her voice of love and spoke to the king of Morven.

Fingal, high - descended chief, trust not Starno's heart of pride. Within that wood he has placed his chiefs; beware of the wood of death. But, remember, son of the hill, remember Agandecca: save me from the wrath of my father, king of the windy Morven!

The youth, with unconcern, went on; his heroes by his side. The sons of death fell by his hand; and Gormal echoed around.

Before the halls of Starno the sons of the chase convened. The king's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of night. Bring hither, he cries, Agandecca to her lovely king of Morven. His hand is stained with the blood of my people; and her words have not been in vain. —

She

[6] Gormal is the name of a hill in Lochlin, in the neighbourhood of Starno's palace.

She came with the red eye of tears. She came with her loose raven locks. Her white breast heaved with sighs, like the foam of the streamy Lubar. Starno pierced her side with steel. She fell like a wreath of snow, that slides from the rocks of Ronan; when the woods are still, and the eccho deepens in the vale.

Then Fingal eyed his valiant chiefs, his valiant chiefs took arms. The gloom of the battle roared, and Lochlin fled or died. — Pale, in his bounding ship he closed the maid of the raven hair. Her tomb ascends on Arden, and the sea roars round the dark dwelling of Agandecca.

Blessed be her soul, said Cuchullin, and blessed be the mouth of the song. — Strong was the youth of Fingal, and strong is his arm of age. Lochlin shall fall again before the king of ecchoing Morven. Shew thy face from a cloud, o moon; light his white sails on the wave of the night. And if any strong spirit [7] of heaven sits on that lowhung cloud; turn

[7] This is the only passage in the poem that has the appearance of religion. — But Cuchullin's apostrophe

turn his dark ships from the rock, thou rider
of the storm!

Such were the words of Cuchullin at the
sound of the mountain-stream, when Calmar
ascended the hill, the wounded son of Matha.
From the field he came in his blood. He lean-
ed on his bending spear. Feeble is the arm of
battle! but strong the soul of the hero!

Welcome! o son of Matha, said Connal,
welcome art thou to thy friends! Why bursts
that broken sigh from the breast of him that
never feared before?

And never, Connal, will he fear, chief of
the pointed steel. My soul brightens in dan-
ger, and exults in the noise of battle. I am
of the race of steel; my fathers never feared.

Cormac

strophe to this spirit is accompanied with a doubt;
so that it is not easy to determine, whether the hero
meant a superior being, or the ghosts of deceased
warriors, who were supposed in those times to rule
the storms, and to transport themselves in a
gust of wind from one country to another.

Cormar was the first of my race. He sported through the storms of the waves. His black skiff bounded on ocean, and travelled on the wings of the blast. A spirit once embroiled the night. Seas swell and rocks resound. Winds drive along the clouds. The lightning flies on wings of fire. He feared and came to land: then blushed that he feared at all. He rushed again among the waves, to find the son of the wind. Three youths guide the bounding bark; he stood with the sword unsheathed. When the low-hung vapour passed, he took it by the curling head, and searched its dark womb with his steel. The son of the wind took the air. The moon and stars returned.

Such was the boldness of my race; and Calmar is like his fathers. Danger flies from the uplifted sword. They best succeed who dare.

But now, ye sons of green-valleyed Erin, retire from Lena's bloody heath. Collect the sad remnant of our friends, and join the sword of Fingal. I heard the sound of Lochlin's advancing arms; but Calmar will remain and fight. My voice shall be such, my friends, as

E if

if thousands were behind me. But, son of Semo, remember me. Remember Calmar's lifeless corse. After Fingal has wasted the field, place me by some stone of remembrance, that future times may hear my fame; and the mother [8] of Calmar rejoice over the stone of my renown.

No, son of Matha, said Cuchullin, I will never leave thee. My joy is in the unequal field; my soul increases in danger. Connal, and Carril of other times, carry off the sad sons of Erin; and when the battle is over, search for our pale corpses in this narrow way. For near this oak we shall stand in the stream of the battle of thousands. — O Fithil's son, with feet of wind, fly over the heath of Lena. Tell to Fingal, that Erin is intralled, and bid the king of Morven hasten. O let him come like the sun in a storm, when he shines on the hills of grass.

Morning is gray on Cromla; the sons of the sea ascend. Calmar stood forth, to meet them in the pride of his kindling soul. But pale was the face of the warrior; he leaned on his

[8] Alclétha, her lamentation over her son is introduced in the poem concerning the death of Cuchullin, printed in this collection.

his father's spear. That spear which he brought from Lara's hall, when the soul of his mother was sad. — But slowly now the hero falls like a tree on the plains of Cona. Dark Cuchullin stands alone like a rock [9] in a sandy vale. The sea comes with its waves, and roars on its hardened sides. Its head is covered with foam, and the hills are echoing around. — Now from the gray mist of the ocean, the white-sailed ships of Fingal appear. High is the grove of their masts, as they nod, by turns, on the rolling wave.

Swaran saw them from the hill, and returned from the sons of Erin. As ebbs the resounding sea through the hundred Isles of Inistore; so loud, so vast, so immense returned the sons of Lochlin against the king of the desert hill. But bending, weeping, sad, and slow, and dragging his long spear behind, Cuchul-

[9]

— + — ἵστα πέτρῃ

Ηλίβατος, μεγάλη, πολὺς ἀλὸς ἐγγὺς ἐστὶν,

&c.

HOM. IL. 15.

So some tall rock o'erhangs the hoary main,
By winds assail'd, by billows beat in vain,
Unmov'd it hears, above, the tempests blow:
And sees the watry mountains break below.

Cuchullin sunk in Cromla's wood, and mourned his fallen friends. He feared the face of Fingal, who was wont to greet him from the fields of renown.

How many lie there of my heroes! the chiefs of Innis-fail! they that were chearful in the hall, when the sound of the shells arose. No more shall I find their steps in the heath, or hear their voice in the chace of the hinds. Pale, silent, low on bloody beds are they who were my friends! O spirits of the lately-dead, meet Cuchullin on his heath. Converse with him on the wind, when the rustling tree of Tura's cave resounds. There, far remote, I shall lie unknown. No bard shall hear of me. No gray stone shall rise to my renown. Mourn me with the death, o Bragela! departed is my fame.

Such were the words of Cuchullin, when he sunk in the woods of Cromla.

Fingal, tall in his ship, stretched his bright lance before him. Terrible was the gleam of the steel: it was like the green meteor of death, setting in the heath of Malmor, when the traveller is alone, and the broad moon is darkened in heaven.

The

The battle is over, said the king, and I behold the blood of my friends. Sad is the heath of Lena; and mournful the oaks of Cromla: the hunters have fallen there in their strength; and the son of Semo is no more. — Ryno and Fillan, my sons, sound the horn of Fingal's war. Ascend that hill on the shore, and call the children of the foe. Call them from the grave of Lamdarg, the chief of other times. — Be your voice like that of your father, when he enters the battles of his strength. I wait for the dark mighty man; I wait on Lena's shore for Swaran. And let him come with all his race; for strong in battle are the friends of the dead.

Fair Ryno flew like lightning; dark Fillan as the shade of autumn. On Lena's heath their voice is heard; the sons of ocean heard the horn of Fingal's war. As the roaring eddy of ocean returning from the kingdom of snows; so strong, so dark, so sudden came down the sons of Lochlin. The king in their front appears in the dismal pride of his arms. Wrath burns in his dark-brown face; and his eyes roll in the fire of his valour.

Fingal beheld the son of Starno; and he remembered Agandecca. — For Swaran with the tears of youth had mourned his white-bosomed sister. He sent Ullin of the songs, to bid him to the feast of shells. For pleasant on Fingal's soul returned the remembrance of the first of his loves.

Ullin came with aged steps, and spoke to Starno's son. O thou that dwellest afar, surrounded, like a rock, with thy waves, come to the feast of the king, and pass the day in rest. To-morrow let us fight, o Swaran, and break the echoing shields.

To-day, said Starno's wrathful son, we break the echoing shields: to-morrow my feast will be spread; and Fingal lie on earth.

And to-morrow let his feast be spread, said Fingal with a smile; for to-day, o my sons, we shall break the echoing shields. — Ossian, stand thou near my arm. Gaul, lift thy terrible sword. Fergus, bend thy crooked yew. Throw, Fillan, thy lance through heaven. — Lift your shields like the darkened moon. Be your spears the meteors of death. Follow me in the path of my fame; and equal my deeds in battle.

As

As a hundred winds on Morven; as the streams of a hundred hills; as clouds fly successive over heaven; or, as the dark ocean assaults the shore of the desert: so roaring, so vast, so terrible the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. — The groan of the people spread over the hills; it was like the thunder of night, when the cloud bursts on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind.

Fingal rushed on in his strength, terrible as the spirit of Trenmor; when, in a whirlwind, he comes to Morven, to see the children of his pride. The oaks resound on their hills, and the rocks fall down before him. — Bloody was the hand of my father, when he whirled the lightning of his sword. He remembers the battles of his youth, and the field is wasted in his course.

Ryno went on like a pillar of fire, —
Dark is the brow of Gaul. Fergus rushed forward with feet of wind; and Fillan like the mist of the hill. Myself [10], like a rock, came
me

[10] Here the poet celebrates his own actions, but he does it in such a manner that we are not displeased.

me down, I exulted in the strength of the king. Many were the deaths of my arm; and dismal was the gleam of my sword. My locks were not then so gray; nor trembled my hands of age. My eyes were not closed in darkness; nor failed my feet in the race.

Who can relate the deaths of the people, or the deeds of mighty heroes; when Fingal, burning in his wrath, consumed the sons of Lochlin? Groans swelled on groans from hill to hill, till night had covered all. Pale, staring like a herd of deer, the sons of Lochlin convene on Lena.

We sat and heard the sprightly harp at Lubar's gentle stream. Fingal himself was next to the foe; and listened to the tales of bards. His godlike race were in the song, the chiefs of other times. Attentive, leaning on his shield, the king of Morven sat. The wind whistled through his aged locks, and his thoughts are of the days of other years. Near him, on his bending spear, my young, my lovely Oscar stood.

ed. The mention of the great actions of his youth immediately suggests to him the helpless situation of his age. We do not despise him for selfish praise, but feel his misfortunes.

stood. He admired the king of Morven: and his actions were swelling in his soul.

Son of my son, begun the king, O Oscar, pride of youth, I saw the shining of thy sword, and gloried in my race. Pursue the glory of our fathers, and be what they have been; when Trenmor lived, the first of men, and Trathal the father of heroes. They fought the battle in their youth, and are the song of bards. — O Oscar! bend the strong in arms: but spare the feeble hand. Be thou a stream of many tides against the foes of thy people; but like the gale that moves the grass, to those who ask thine aid. — So Trenmor lived; such Trathal was; and such has Fingal been. My arm was the support of the injured; and the weak rested behind the lightning of my steel.

Oscar! I was young like thee, when lovely Fainafóllis came: that sun-beam! that mild light of love! the daughter of Craca's [II]
king!

[II] What the Craca here mentioned was, is not, at this distance of time, easy to determine. The most probable opinion is, that it was one of the

king! I then returned from Cona's heath, and few were in my train. A white-failed boat appeared far off; we saw it like a mist that rode on ocean's blast. It soon approached; we saw the fair. Her white breast heaved with sighs. The wind was in her loose dark hair; her rosy cheek had tears. — Daughter of beauty, calm I said, what sigh is in that breast? Can I, young as I am, defend thee, daughter of the sea? My sword is not unmarched in war, but dauntless is my heart.

To thee I fly, with sighs she replied, o chief of mighty men! To thee I fly, chief of shells, supporter of the feeble hand! The king of Craca's echoing isle owned me the sun-beam of his race. And often did the hills of Cromla reply to the sighs of love for the unhappy Fainasóllis. Sora's chief beheld my fair; and loved the daughter of Craca. His sword is like a beam of light upon the warrior's side. But dark is his brow; and tempests are in his soul. I shun him on the rolling sea; but Sora's chief pursues.

Rest

Shetland isles. — There is a story concerning a daughter of the king of Craca in the sixth book.

Rest thou, I said, behind my shield; rest in peace, thou beam of light! The gloomy chief of Sora will fly, if Fingal's arm is like his soul. In some lone cave I might conceal thee, daughter of the sea! But Fingal never flies; for where the danger threatens, I rejoice in the storm of spears. — I saw the tears upon her cheek. I pitied Craca's fair.

Now, like a dreadful wave afar, appeared the ship of stormy Borbar. His masts high-bended over the sea behind their sheets of snow. White roll the waters on either side. The strength of ocean sounds. Come thou, I said, from the roar of ocean, thou rider of the storm. Partake the feast within my hall. It is the house of strangers. — The maid stood trembling by my side; he drew the bow: she fell. Unerring is thy hand, I said, but feeble was the foe. — We fought, nor weak was the strife of death: He sunk beneath my sword. We laid them in two tombs of stones; the unhappy children of youth.

Such have I been in my youth, o Oscar;
be thou like the age of Fingal. Never seek
the

the battle, nor shun it when it comes. —
 Fillan and Oscar of the dark-brown hair; ye
 children of the race; fly over the heath of roar-
 ing winds; and view the sons of Lochlin. Far
 off I hear the noise of their fear, like the
 storms of ecchoing Cona. Go: that they may not
 fly my sword along the waves of the north. —
 For many chiefs of Erin's race lie here on the
 dark bed of death. The children of the storm
 are low; the sons of ecchoing Cromla.

The heroes flew like two dark clouds; two
 dark clouds that are the chariots of ghosts;
 when air's dark children come to frighten hapless
 men.

It was then that Gaul [12], the son of
 Morni, stood like a rock in the night. His
 spear

[12] Gaul, the son of Morni, was chief of a tribe, that
 disputed long, the pre-eminence, with Fingal
 himself. They were reduced at last to obedience,
 and Gaul, from an enemy, turned Fingal's best
 friend and greatest hero. His character is some-
 thing like that of Ajax in the Iliad; a hero of mo-
 re strength than conduct in battle. He was very
 fond of military fame, and here he demands the
 next battle to himself. — The poet, by an arti-
 fice, removes Fingal, that his return may be the
 more magnificent.

spear is glittering to the stars; his voice like many streams. — Son of battle, cried the chief, O Fingal, king of shells! let the bards of many songs sooth Erin's friends to rest. And, Fingal, sheath thy sword of death; and let thy people fight. We wither away without our fame; for our king is the only breaker of shields. When morning rises on our hills, behold at a distance our deeds. Let Lochlin feel the sword of Morni's son; that bards may sing of me. Such was the custom heretofore of Fingal's noble race. Such was thine own, thou king of swords, in battles of the spear.

O son of Morni, Fingal replied, I glory in thy fame. — Fight; but my spear shall be near to aid thee in the midst of danger. Raise, raise the voice, sons of the song, and lull me into rest. Here will Fingal lie amidst the wind of night. — And if thou, Agandecca, art near, among the children of thy land; if thou sittest on a blast of wind among the high-shrowded masts of Lochlin; come to my dreams [1], my fair one, and shew thy bright face to my soul.

Many

[1] The poet prepares us for the dream of Fingal in the next book.

Many a voice and many a harp in tuneful
sounds arose. Of Fingal's noble deeds they sung,
and of the noble race of the hero. And so-
metimes on the lovely sound was heard the name
of the now mournful Ossian.

Often have I fought, and often won in
battles of the spear. But blind, and tearful,
and forlorn I now walk with little men. O
Fingal, with thy race of battle now behold
thee not. The wild roes feed upon the green
tomb of the mighty king of Morven. —
Blest be thy soul, thou king of swords, thou
most renowned on the hills of Cona!

F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK IV.

ARGUMENT to BOOK IV.

The action of the poem being suspended by night, Ossian takes that opportunity to relate his own actions at the lake of Lego, and his courtship of Evirallin, who was the mother of Oscar, and had died some time before the expedition of Fingal into Ireland. Her ghost appears to him, and tells him, that Oscar, who had been sent, the beginning of the night, to observe the enemy, was engaged with an advanced party, and almost overpowered. Ossian relieves his son; and an alarm is given to Fingal of the approach of Swaran. The king rises, calls his army together; and, as he had promised the preceding night, devolves the command on Gaul the son of Morni: while he himself, after charging his sons to behave gallantly and defend his people, retires to a hill, from whence he could have a view of the battle. The battle joins; the poet relates Oscar's great actions. But when Oscar, in conjunction with his father, conquered in one wing, Gaul, who was attacked by Swaran in person, was on the point of retreat in the other. Fingal sends Ullin his bard, to encourage him with a war-song, but notwithstanding Swaran prevails; and Gaul and his army are obliged to give

ARGUMENT to Book IV.

give way. Fingal, descending from the hill, rallies them again: Swaran desists from the pursuit, possesses himself of a rising ground, restores the ranks, and waits the approach of Fingal. The king, having encouraged his men, gives the necessary orders, and renews the battle. Cuthullin, who, with his friend Connal, and Carril his bard, had retired to the cave of Tura, hearing the noise, came to the brow of the hill, which overlooked the field of battle, where he saw Fingal engaged with the enemy. He, being hindered by Connal from joining Fingal, who was himself upon the point of obtaining a complete victory, sends Carril to congratulate that hero on his success.

(82)
F I N G A L ,

AN ANCIENT
E P I C P O E M

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK IV. (1)

Who comes with her songs from the mountain, like the bow of the showery Lena? It is the maid of the voice of love. The white-armed daughter of Toscar. Often
haft

[1] Fingal being asleep, and the action suspended by night, the poet introduces the story of his courtship of Evirallin the daughter of Branno. The episode is necessary to clear up several passages that follow in the poem; at the same time that it naturally brings on the action of the book, which may be supposed to begin about the middle of the third night from the opening of the poem. — This book, as many of Ossian's other compositions, is addressed to the beautiful Malvina the daughter of Toscar. She appears to have been
in

hast thou heard my song, and given the tear
of beauty. Dost thou come to the battles of
thy people, and to hear the actions of Oscar?
When shall I cease to mourn by the streams
of the echoing Cona? My years have passed
away in battle, and my age is darkened with
sorrow.

Daughter of the hand of snow! I was not
so mournful and blind; I was not so dark and
forlorn, when Everallin loved me. Everallin
with the dark-brown hair, the white-bosomed
love of Cormac. A thousand heroes fought the
maid, she denied her love to a thousand; the
sons of the sword were despised; for graceful
in her eyes was Ossian.

I went in suit of the maid to Lego's sable
surge; twelve of my people were there, the
sons of the streamy Morven. We came to
Branno friend of strangers; Branno of the
sounding mail. — From whence, he said,
are the arms of steel? Not easy to win is the
maid, that has denied the blue-eyed sons of
Erin.

in love with Oscar; and to have affected the
company of the father after the death of the son.

Erin. But blest be thou, o son of Fingal,
happy is the maid that waits thee. Tho' twelve
daughters of beauty were mine, thine were the
choice, thou son of fame! — Then he open-
ed the hall of the maid, the dark-haired
Everallin. Joy kindled in our breasts of steel,
and blest the maid of Branno.

Above us on the hill appeared the people
of stately Cormac. Eight were the heroes of
the chief; and the heath flamed with their arms.
There Colla, Durra of the wounds, there
mighty Toscar, and Tago, there Frestal the
victorious stood; Dairo of the happy deeds,
and Dala the battle's bulwark in the hand of
Cormac, and graceful was the look of the
hero.

Eight were the heroes of Ossian; Ullin
stormy son of war; Mullo of the generous
deeds; the noble, the graceful Scelacha; Oglan,
and Cerdal the wrathful, and Duma-riccan's
brows of death. And why should Ogar be the
last; so wide renowned on the hills of
Ardven?

Ogar

Ogar met Dala the strong, face to face,
 on the field of heroes. The battle of the chiefs
 was like the wind on ocean's foamy waves.
 The dagger is remembered by Ogar; the wea-
 pon which he loved; nine times he drowned it
 in Dala's side. The stormy battle turned.
 Three times I pierced Cormac's shield: three
 times he broke his spear. But, unhappy youth
 of love! I cut his head away, — Five ti-
 mes I shook it by the lock. The friends of
 Cormac fled.

Whoever would have told me, lovely
 maid [2], when then I strove in battle; that
 blind, forsaken, and forlorn I now should pass
 the night; firm ought his mail to have been,
 and unmatched his arm in battle.

Now [3] on Lena's gloomy heath the
 voice of music died away. The unconstant
 blast blew hard, and the high oak shook its
 leaves

[2] The poet addresses himself to Malvina the daugh-
 ter of Toscar.

[3] The poet returns to his subject. If one could
 fix the time of the year, in which the action of
 the poem happened, from the scene described
 here, I should be tempted to place it in autumn. —
 The trees shed their leaves, and the winds are

leaves around me; of Everallin were my thoughts, when she, in all the light of beauty, and her blue eyes rolling in tears, stood on a cloud before my sight, and spoke with feeble voice.

O Ossian, rise and save my son; save O-scar chief of men: near the red oak of Lubar's stream, he fights with Lochlin's sons. — She sunk into her cloud again. I clothed me with my steel. My spear supported my steps, and my rattling armour rung. I hummed, as I was wont in danger, the songs of heroes of old. Like distant thunder [4] Lochlin heard; they fled; my son pursued.

I cal-

variable, both which circumstances agree with that season of the year.

[4] Ossian gives the reader a high idea of himself. His very song frightens the enemy. This passage resembles one in the eighteenth Iliad, where the voice of Achilles frightens the Trojans from the body of Patroclus.

Forth march'd the chief, and distant from the
crowd

High on the rampart rais'd his voice aloud,
So high his breazen voice the hero rear'd,
Hosts drop their arms and trembled as they
fear'd.

POPE

I called him like a distant stream. My son, return over Lena. No further pursue the foe, though Ossian is behind thee. — He came; and lovely in my ear was Oscar's sounding steel. Why didst thou stop my hand, he said, till death had covered all? For dark and dreadful by the stream they met thy son and Fillan. They watched the terrors of the night. Our swords have conquered some. But as the winds of night pour the ocean over the white sands of Mora, so dark advance the sons of Lochlin over Lena's rustling heath. The ghosts of night shriek afar; and I have seen the meteors of death. Let me awake the king of Morven, he that smiles in danger; for he is like the son of heaven that rises in a storm.

Fingal had started from a dream, and leaned on Trenmor's shield; the dark-brown shield of his fathers; which they had lifted of old in the battles of their race. — The hero had seen in his rest the mournful form of Agandecca; she came from the way of the ocean, and slowly, lonely, moved over Lena. Her face was pale like the mist of Cromla; and dark were the tears of her cheek. She often raised her dim hand from her robe;

her robe which was of the clouds of the desert: she raised her dim band over Fingal, and turned away her silent eyes.

Why weeps the daughter of Starno, said Fingal, with a sigh? Why is thy face so pale, thou daughter of the clouds? — She departed on the wind of Lena; and left him in the midst of the night. — She mourned the sons of her people, that were to fall by Fingal's hand.

The hero started from rest, and still beheld her in his soul. — The sound of Oscar's steps approached. The king saw the grey shield on his side. For the faint beam of the morning came over the waters of Ullin.

What do the foes in their fear? said the rising king of Morven. Or fly they through ocean's foam, or wait they the battle of steel? But why should Fingal ask? I hear their voice on the early wind. — Fly over Lena's heath, o Oscar, and awake our friends to battle.

The king stood by the stone of Lubar; and thrice raised his terrible voice. The deer started

started from the fountains of Cromla; and all the rocks shook on their hills. Like the noise of a hundred mountain-streams, that burst, and roar, and foam; like the clouds that gather to a tempest on the blue face of the sky; so met the sons of the desert, round the terrible voice of Fingal. For pleasant was the voice of the king of Morven to the warriors of his land: often had he led them to battle, and returned with the spoils of the foe.

Come to battle, said the king, ye children of the storm. Come to the death of thousands. Comhal's son will see the fight. — My sword shall wave on that hill, and be the shield of my people. But never may you need it, warriors; while the son of Morni fights, the chief of mighty men. — He shall lead my battle; that his fame may rise in the song. — O ye ghosts of heroes dead! ye riders of the storm of Cromla! receive my falling people with joy, and bring them to your hills. — And may the blast of Lena carry them over my seas, that they may come to my silent dreams, and delight my soul in rest.

Fillan and Oscar, of the dark - brown hair! fair Ryno, with the pointed steel! advance with valour to the fight; and behold the son of Morni. Let your sword be like his in the strife: and behold the deeds of his hands. Protect the friends of your father: and remember the chiefs of old. My children, I shall see you yet, though here ye should fall in Erin. Soon shall our cold, pale ghosts meet in a cloud, and fly over the hills of Cona.

Now like a dark and stormy cloud, edged round with the red lightning of heaven, and flying westward from the morning's beam, the king of hills removed. Terrible is the light of his armour, and two spears are in his hand. — His gray hair falls on the wind. — He often looks back on the war. Three bards attend the son of fame, to carry his words to the heroes. — High on Cromla's side he sat, waving the lightning of his sword; and as he waved, we moved.

Joy rose in Oscar's face. His cheek is red. His eye sheds tears. The sword is a beam of fire in his hand. He came, and smiling, spoke

ke to Ossian. — O ruler of the fight of steel!
my father, hear thy son. Retire with Morven's
mighty chief; and give me Ossian's fame. And
if here I fall; my king, remember that breast
of snow, that lonely sun-beam of my love,
the white-handed daughter of Toscar. For
with red cheek from the rock, and bending
over the stream, her soft hair flies about her
bosom, as she pours the sigh for Oscar. Tell
her, I am on my hills a lightly-bounding son
of the wind; that hereafter, in a cloud, I may
meet the lovely maid of Toscar.

Raise, Oscar, rather raise my tomb. I
will not yield the fight to thee. For first and
bloodiest in the war my arm shall teach thee
how to fight. But, remember, my son, to
place this sword, this bow, and the horn of
my deer, within that dark and narrow house,
whose mark is one gray stone. Oscar, I have
no love to leave to the care of my son; for
graceful Evirallin is no more, the lovely
daughter of Branno.

Such were our words, when Gaul's loud
voice came growing on the wind. He waved
on high the sword of his father, and rushed to
death and wounds.

As

As waves white-bubbling over the deep
 come swelling, roaring on; as rocks of ooze
 met roaring waves; so foes attacked and fought.
 Man met with man, and steel with steel.
 Shields sound; men fall. As a hundred ham-
 mers on the son of the furnace, so rose, so
 rung their swords.

Gaul rushed on like a whirlwind in Ard-
 ven. The destruction of heroes is on his sword.
 Swaran was like the fire of the desert in the
 echoing heath of Gormal. How can I give to
 the song the death of many spears? My sword
 rose high, and flamed in the strife of blood.
 And, Oscar, terrible wert thou, my best, my
 greatest son! I rejoiced in my secret soul, when
 his sword flamed over the slain. They fled
 amain through Lena's heath: and we pursued
 and slew. As stones that bound from rock to
 rock; as axes in echoing woods; as thunder
 rolls from hill to hill in dismal broken peals;
 so blow succeeded to blow, and death to death,
 from the hand of Oscar [5] and mine.

But

[5] Ossian never fails to give a fine character of his
 beloved son. His speech to his father is that of
 a hero; it contains the submission due to a pa-
 rent,

But Swaran closed round Morni's son, as the strength of the tide of Inistore. The king half-rose from his hill at the sight, and half-assumed the spear. Go, Ullin; go, my aged bard, begun the king of Morven. Remind the mighty Gaul of battle; remind him of his fathers. Support the yielding fight with song; for song enlivens war. Tall Ullin went, with steps of age, and spoke to the king of swords.

Son [6] of the chief of generous steeds!
- high-bounding king of spears. Strong arm in every

rent, and the warmth that becomes a young warrior. There is a propriety in dwelling here on the actions of Oscar, as the beautiful Malvina, to whom the book is addressed, was in love with that hero.

[6] The war-song of Ullin varies from the rest of the poem in the versification. It runs down like a torrent; and consists almost intirely of epithets. The custom of encouraging men in battle with extempore rhymes, has been carried down almost to our own times. Several of these war-songs are exstant, but the most of them are only a group of epithets, without beauty or harmony, utterly destitute of poetical merit.

every perilous toil. Hard heart, that never yields. Chief of the pointed arms of death. Cut down the foe; let no white sail bound round dark Inistore. Be thine arm like thunder. Thine eyes like fire, thy heart of solid rock. Whirl round thy sword as a meteor at night, and lift thy shield like the flame of death. Son of the chief of generous steeds, cut down the foe; destroy. — The hero's heart beat high. But Swaran came with battle. He cleft the shield of Gaul in twain; and the sons of the desert fled.

Now Fingal arose in his might, and thrice he reared his voice. Cromla answered around, and the sons of the desert stood still. — They bent their red faces to earth, ashamed at the presence of Fingal. He came like a cloud of rain in the days of the sun, when slow it rolls on the hill, and fields expect the shower. Swaran beheld the terrible king of Morven, and stopped in the midst of his course. Dark he leaned on his spear, rolling his red eyes around. Silent and tall he seemed as an oak on the banks of Lubar, which had its branches blasted of old by the lightning of heaven. It bends over the stream, and the
gray

gray moss whistles in the wind: so stood the king. Then slowly he retired to the rising heath of Lena. His thousands pour around the hero, and the darkness of battle gathers on the hill.

Fingal, like a beam from heaven, shone in the midst of his people. His heroes gather around him, and he sends forth the voice of his power. Raise my standards [7] on high, — spread them on Lena's wind, like the flames of an hundred hills. Let them sound on the winds of Erin, and remind us of the fight. Ye sons of the roaring streams, that pour from a thousand hills, be near the king of Morven: attend to the words of his power. Gaul, strongest arm of death! O Oscar, of the future fights; Connal, son of the blue steel of Sora; Dermid of the dark-brown hair, and Ossian king of many songs, be near your father's arm.

We reared the sun-beam [8] of battle; the standard of the king. Each hero's soul exulted

[7] Th' imperial ensign, which full high advanc'd,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind.

MILTON.

[8] Fingal's standard was distinguished by the name of *sun-beam*; probably on account of its bright colour.

exulted with joy, as, waving, it flew on the wind. It was studded with gold above, as the blue wide shell of the nightly sky. Each hero had his standard too; and each his gloomy men.

Behold, said the king of generous shells, how Lochlin divides on Lena. — They stand like broken clouds on the hill, or an half consumed grove of oaks; when we see the sky through its branches, and the meteor passing behind. Let every chief among the friends of Fingal take a dark troop of those that frown so high; nor let a son of the echoing groves bound on the waves of Inistore.

Mine, said Gaul, be the seven chiefs, that came from Lano's lake. — Let Inistore's dark king, said Oscar, come to the sword of Ossian's son. — To mine the king of Inilcon, said Connal, heart of steel! Or Mudan's chief or I, said brown-haired Dermid, shall sleep on clay-cold earth. My choice, though now so weak and dark, was Terman's battling king; I promised, with my hand to win the hero's colour, and its being studded with gold. To begin a battle is expressed, in old composition, by *lifting of the sun-beam*.

hero's dark-brown shield. — Bleft and victorious be my chiefs, said Fingal of the mildest look; Swaran, king of roaring waves, thou art the choice of Fingal.

Now, like an hundred different winds, that pour through many vales; divided, dark, the sons of the hill advanced, and Cromla echoed around.

How can I relate the deaths, when we closed in the strife of our steel? O daughter of Toscar! bloody were our hands! The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell like the banks of the roaring Cona. — Our arms were victorious on Lena; each chief fulfilled his promise. Beside the murmur of Branno thou didst often sit, O maid; when thy white bosom rose frequent, like the down of the swan, when slow she sails the lake, and sidelong winds are blowing. — Thou hast seen the sun [9] retire red and slow

[9] *Sol quoque, & exoriens & cum se condit in nndas,
Signa dabit. Solem certissima signa sequuntur,
Ut quae mane refert, & quae surgentibus astris.
Ille ubi nascentem machlis variaverit ortum
Conditus in nubem, medioque refugerit orbe;
Suspecti tibi sunt imbres.*

VIRG.

Above

flow behind his cloud; night gathering round
on the mountain, while the unfrequent blast [10]
roared in narrow vales. At length the rain
beats hard; and thunder rolls in peals. Light-
ning glances on the rocks, Spirits ride on
beams of fire. And the strength of the moun-
tain-streams [11] comes roaring down the hills.

Such

Above the rest the sun, who never lies,
Foretels the change of weather in the skies.
For if he rise, unwilling to his race,
Clouds on his brow and spots upon his face;
Or if thro' mists he shoots his fullen beams,
Frugal of light, in loose and straggling streams;
Suspect a drifling day.

DRYDEN.

[10] *Continuo ventis surgentibus aut freta ponti
Incipiunt agitata tumescere; & aridus altis
Montibus audiri fragor, aut resonantia longe
Littora misceri, & nemorum increbescere murmur.*

VIRG.

For ere the rising winds begin to roar,
The working seas advance to wash the shore;
Soft whispers run along the leafy wood,
And mountains whistle to the murm'ring flood.

DRYDEN.

[11] — *ruunt de montibus omnes.* VIRG.

The rapid rains, descending from the hills,
To rolling torrents swell the creeping rills.

DRYDEN.

Such was the noise of battle, maid of the arms
of snow. Why, daughter of the hill, that
tear? the maids of Lochlin have cause to weep.
The people of their country fell, for bloody
was the blue steel of the race of my heroes.
But I am sad, forlorn, and blind; and no more
the companion of heroes. Give, lovely maid,
to me thy tears, for I have seen the tombs of
all my friends.

It was then by Fingal's hand a hero fell,
to his grief — Gray-haired he rolled in the
dust; and lifted his faint eyes to the king.
And is it by me thou hast fallen, said the son
of Comhal, thou friend of Agandecca! I saw
thy tears for the maid of my love, in the halls
of the bloody Starno. Thou hast been the foe
of the foes of my love, and hast thou fallen
by my hand? Raise, Ullin, raise the grave of
the son of Mathon; and give his name to the
song of Agandecca; for dear to my soul hast
thou been, thou darkly-dwelling maid of
Ardven.

Cuchullin, from the cave of Cromla, heard
the noise of the troubled war. He called to
Connal chief of swords, and Carril of other
times.

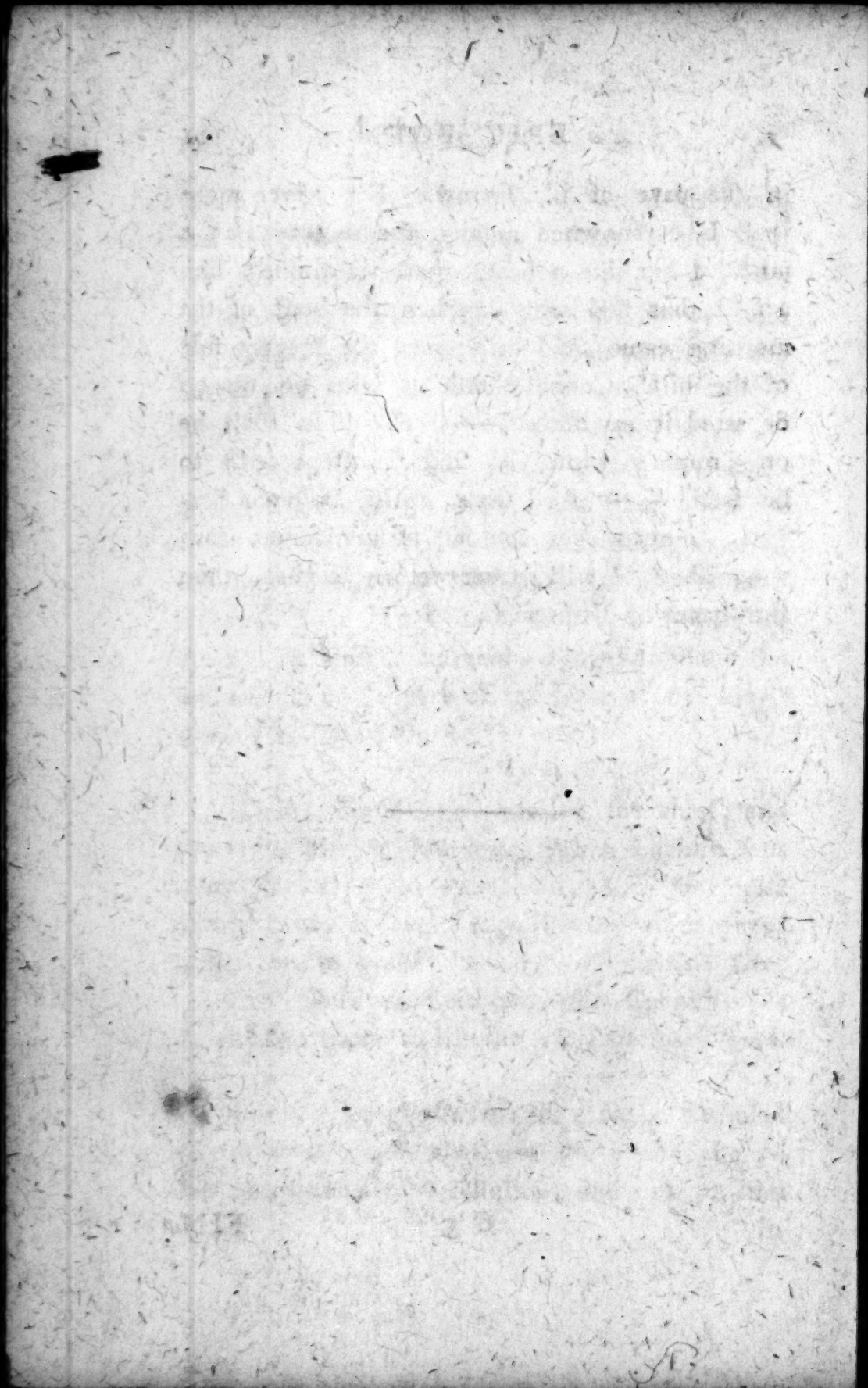
times. The gray-haired heroes heard his voice, and took their aspen spears. They came, and saw the tide of battle, like the crowded waves of the ocean; when the dark wind blows from the deep, and rolls the billows through the sandy vale.

Cuchullin kindled at the sight, and darkness gathered on his brow. His hand is on the sword of his fathers: his red-rolling eyes on the foe. He thrice attempted to rush to battle, and thrice did Connal stop him. Chief of the isle of mist, he said, Fingal subdues the foe. Seek not a part of the fame of the king; himself is like a storm.

Then, Carril, go, replied the chief, and greet the king of Morven. When Lochlin falls away like a stream after rain, and the noise of the battle is over, then be thy voice sweet in his ear, to praise the king of swords. Give him the sword of Caithbat; for Cuchullin is worthy no more to lift the arms of his fathers.

But, o ye ghosts of the lonely Cromla! ye souls of chiefs that are no more! be ye the companions of Cuchullin, and talk to him
in

in the cave of his sorrow. For never more shall I be renowned among the mighty in the land. I am like a beam that has shone; like a mist that fled away, when the blast of the morning came, and brightened the shaggy side of the hill. Connal, talk of arms no more: departed is my fame. — My sighs shall be on Cromla's wind, till my footsteps cease to be seen. — And thou, white-bosom'd Bragela, mourn over the fall of my fame; for, vanquished, I will never return to thee, thou sun-beam of Dunscaich.



F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT to Book V.

Cuchullin and Connal still remain on the hill.

Fingal and Swaran meet; the combat is described. Swaran is overcome, bound and delivered over as a prisoner to the care of Ossian and Gaul the son of Morni; Fingal, his younger sons, and Oscar, still pursue the enemy. The episode of Orla a chief of Lochlin, who was mortally wounded in the battle, is introduced. Fingal, touched with the death of Orla, orders the pursuit to be discontinued; and calling his sons together, he is informed, that Ryno, the youngest of them, was killed. He laments his death, hears the story of Lamdarg and Gelchoffa, and returns towards the place where he had left Swaran. Carril, who had been sent by Cuchullin, to congratulate Fingal on his victory, comes in the mean time to Ossian. The conversation of the two poets closes the action of the fourth day.

FIN.

F I N G A L,

AN ANCIENT

E P I C P O E M

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK V. (1)

Now Connal, on Cromla's windy side, spoke
to the chief of the noble car. Why that
gloom, son of Semo? Our friends are the
mighty in battle. And renowned art thou,
o war-

- [1] The fourth day still continues. The poet, by putting the narration in the mouth of Connal, who still remained with Cuchullin on the side of Cromla, gives propriety to the praises of Fingal. The beginning of this book, in the original, is one of the most beautiful parts of the poem. The versification is regular and full, and agrees very well with the sedate character of Connal. — No poet has adapted the cadence of his verse more to the temper of the speaker, than Ossian

o warrior! many were the deaths of thy steel. Often has Bragela met with blue-rolling eyes of joy, often has she met her hero, returning in the midst of the valiant; when his sword was red with slaughter, and his foes silent in the fields of the tomb. Pleasant to her ears were thy bards, when thine actions rose in the song.

But behold the king of Morven; he moves below like a pillar of fire. His strength is like the stream of Lubar, or the wind of the echoing Cromla; when the branchy forests of night are overturned.

Happy are thy people, o Fingal, thine arm shall fight their battles: thou art the first in their dangers; the wisest in the days of their peace. Thou speakest and thy thousands obey; and armies tremble at the sound of thy steel. Happy are thy people, Fingal, chief of the lonely hills.

Who

has done. It is more than probable, that the whole poem was originally designed to be sung to the harp, as the versification is so various, and so much suited to the different passions of the human mind.

Who is that so dark and terrible, coming
in the thunder of his course? who is it but
Starno's son, to meet the king of Morven? Be-
hold the battle of the chiefs: it is like the
storm of the ocean, when two spirits meet far
distant, and contend for the rolling of the wa-
ve. The hunter hears the noise on his hill;
and sees the high billows advancing to Ardven's
shore.

Such were the words of Connal, when the
heroes met in the midst of their falling people.
There was the clang of arms! there every blow,
like the hundred hammers of the furnace! Ter-
rible is the battle of the kings, and horrid the
look of their eyes. Their dark-brown shields
are cleft in twain; and their steel flies, broken,
from their helmets. They fling their weapons
down. Each rushes [2] to the grasp of his
foe.

[2] This passage resembles one in the twenty-third
Iliad.

Close lock'd above their heads and arms are mixt;
Below their planted feet at distance fixt;
Now to the grasp each manly body bends;
The humid sweat from ev'ry pore descends;
Their bones resound with blows: sides, shoul-
ders, thighs,
Swell to each gripe, and bloody tumours rise.

POPE.

foe. Their finewy arms bend round each other: they turn from side to side, and strain and stretch their large spreading limbs below. But when the pride of their strength arose, they shook the hill with their heels; rocks tumble from their places on high; the green-headed bushes are overturned. At length the strength of Swaran fell; and the king of the groves is bound.

Thus have I seen on Cona; (but Cona I behold no more) thus have I seen two dark hills removed from their place by the strength of the bursting stream. They turn from side to side, and their tall oaks meet one another on high. Then they fall together with all their rocks and trees. The streams are turned by their sides, and the red ruin is seen afar.

Sons of the king of Morven, said the noble Fingal, guard the king of Lochlin; for he is strong as his thousand waves. His hand is taught to the battle, and his race of the times of old. Gaul, thou first of my heroes, and Ossian king of songs, attend the friend of Agandecca, and raise to joy his grief. — But, Oskar, Fillan, and Ryno, ye children of the

the race! pursue the rest of Lochlin over the heath of Lena; that no vessel may hereafter bound on the dark-rolling waves of Inistore.

They flew like lightning over the heath. He slowly moved as a cloud of thunder, when the fultry plain of summer is silent. His sword is before him as a sun-beam, terrible as the streaming meteor of night. He came toward a chief of Lochlin, and spoke to the son of the wave.

Who is that like a cloud at the rock of the roaring stream? He cannot bound over its course; yet stately is the chief! his bossy shield is on his side; and his spear like the tree of the desert. Youth of the dark-brown hair, art thou of Fingal's foes?

I am a son of Lochlin, he cries, and strong is my arm in war. My spouse is weeping at home, but Orla [3] will never return.

Or

[3] The story of Orla is so beautiful and affecting in the original, that many are in possession of it in the north of Scotland, who never heard a syllable more of the poem. It varies the action, and

Or fights or yields the hero, said Fingal of the noble deeds? foes do not conquer in my presence: but my friends are renowned in the hall. Son of the wave, follow me, partake the feast of my shells, and pursue the deer of my desert.

No: said the hero, I assist the feeble: my strength shall remain with the weak in arms. My sword has been always unmatched, o warrior: let the king of Morven yield.

I never yielded, Orla, Fingal never yielded to man. Draw thy sword and chase thy foe. Many are my heroes.

And does the king refuse the combat, said Orla of the dark-brown hair? Fingal is a match for Orla: and he alone of all his race. — But, king of Morven, if I shall fall; (as one time the warrior must die;) raise my tomb in the midst, and let it be the greatest on Lena. And send, over the dark-blue wave, the sword of Orla to the spouse of his love; that she may shew it to her son, with tears, to kindle his soul to war.

Son

and awakes the attention of the reader, when he expected nothing but languor in the conduct of the poem, as the great action was over in the conquest of Swaran.

Son of the mournful tale, said Fingal,
why dost thou awaken my tears? One day the
warriors must die, and the children see their
useless arms in the hall. But, Orla, thy tomb
shall rise, and thy white-bosomed spouse weep
over thy sword.

They fought on the heath of Lena, but
feeble was the arm of Orla. The sword of Fin-
gal descended, and cleft his shield in twain. It
fell and glittered on the ground, as the moon
on the stream of night.

King of Morven, said the hero, lift thy
sword, and pierce my breast. Wounded and
faint from battle my friends have left me here.
The mournful tale shall come to my love on
the banks of the streamy Loda; when she is
alone in the wood; and the rustling blast in
the leaves.

No; said the king of Morven, I will ne-
ver wound thee, Orla. On the banks of Loda
let her see thee escaped from the hands of war.
Let thy gray-haired father, who, perhaps, is
blind with age, hear the sound of thy voice in
his hall. — With joy let the hero rise, and
search for his son with his hands.

But

But never will he find him, Fingal; said
the youth of the streamy Loda. — On Le-
na's heath I shall die; and foreign bards will
talk of me. My broad belt covers my wound
of death. And now I give it to the wind.

The dark blood poured from his side, he
fell pale on the heath of Lena. Fingal bends
over him as he dies, and calls his younger
heroes,

Oscar and Fillan, my sons, raise high the
memory of Orla. Here let the dark-haired
hero rest far from the spouse of his love. He-
re let him rest in his narrow house far from
the found of Loda. The sons of the feeble will
find his bow at home, but will not be able
to bend it. His faithful dogs howl on his
hills, and his boars, which he used to pursue,
rejoice. Fallen is the arm of battle; the mighty
among the valiant is low!

Exalt the voice, and blow the horn, ye
sons of the king of Morven: let us go back
to Swaran, and send the night away on song.
Fillan, Oscar, and Ryno, fly over the heath
of Lena. Where, Ryno, art thou, young son
of fame? Thou art not wont to be the last to
answer thy father.

Ryno,

Ryno, said Ullin first of bards, is with the
awful forms of his fathers. With Trathal king
of shields, and Trenmor of the mighty deeds.
The youth is low, — the youth is pale, —
he lies on Lena's heath.

And fell the swiftest in the race, said the
king, the first to bend the bow? Thou scarce
hast been known to me: why did young Ryno
fall? But sleep thou softly on Lena, Fingal
shall soon behold thee. Soon shall my voice
be heard no more, and my footsteps cease to
be seen. The bards will tell of Fingal's name;
the stones will talk of me. But, Ryno, thou
art low indeed, — thou hast not received
thy fame. Ullin, strike the harp for Ryno;
tell what the chief would have been. Farewel,
thou first in every field. No more shall I di-
rect thy dart. Thou that hast been so fair;
I behold thee not — Farewel.

The tear is on the cheek of the king; for
terrible was his son in war. His son! that
was like a beam of fire by night on the hill;
when the forests sink down in its course, and
the traveller trembles at the sound.

H

Whose

Whose fame is in that dark-green tomb,
 begun the king of generous shells? four stones
 with their heads of moss stand there; and mark
 the narrow house of death. Near it let my
 Ryno rest, and be the neighbour of the valiant.
 Perhaps some chief of fame is here to fly with
 my son on clouds. O Ullin, raise the songs of
 other times. Bring to memory the dark dwell-
 ers of the tomb. If in the field of the valiant
 they never fled from danger, my son shall rest
 with them, far from his friends, on the heath
 of Lena.

Here, said the mouth of the song, here
 rest the first of heroes. Silent is Lamderg [4]
 in his tomb, and Ullin king of swords. And
 who, soft smiling from her cloud, shews me
 her face of love? Why, daughter, why so pa-
 le art thou, first of the maids of Cromla? Dost
 thou sleep with the foes in battle, Gelchoffa,
 white-bosomed daughter of Tuathal? — Thou
 hast been the love of thousands, but Lamderg
 was thy love. He came to Selma's mossy tow-
 ers, and, striking his dark buckler, spoke:

Where

[4] Lamh-dhearg signifies *bloody band*. Gelchoffa,
white-legged. Tuathal, *furly*. Ulfadda, *long-*
beard. Ferchios, *the conqueror of men*.

Where is Gelchoffa, my love, the daughter of the noble Tuathal? I left her in the hall of Selma, when I fought with the gloomy Ulfadda. Return soon, o Lamderg, she said, for here I am in the midst of sorrow. Her white breast rose with sighs. Her cheek was wet with tears. But I see her not coming to meet me; and to sooth my soul after battle. Silent is the hall of my joy; I hear not the voice of the bard. — Bran [5] does not shake his chains at the gate, glad at the coming of Lamderg. Where is Gelchoffa, my love, the mild daughter of the generous Tuathal?

Lamderg! says Ferchios the son of Aidon, Gelchoffa may be on Cromla; she and the maids of the bow pursuing the flying deer.

Ferchios! replied the chief of Cromla, no noise meets the ear of Lamderg. No sound is in the woods of Lena. No deer fly in my sight. No panting dog pursues. I see not Gel-

[5] Bran is a common name of gray-hounds to this day. It is a custom in the north of Scotland, to give the names of the heroes mentioned in this poem, to their dogs; a proof that they are familiar to the ear, and their fame generally known.

Gelchoffa my love, fair as the full moon setting on the hills of Cromla. Go, Ferchios, go to Allad [6], the gray-haired son of the rock. His dwelling is in the circle of stones. He may know of Gelchoffa.

The son of Aidon went; and spoke to the ear of age. Allad! thou that dwellest in the rock; thou that tremblest alone, what saw thine eyes of age?

I saw, answered Allad the old, Ullin the son of Cairbar. He came like a cloud from Cromla; and he hummed a farly song, like a blast in a leafless wood. He entered the hall of Selma. — Lamderg, he said, most dreadful of men, fight or yield to Ullin. Lamderg, replied Gelchoffa, the son of battle, is not here. He fights Ulfadda mighty chief. He is not here, thou first of men. But Lamderg never yielded. He will fight the son of Cairbar.

Lovely

[6] Allad is plainly a druid: he is called the son of the rock, from his dwelling in a cave; and the circle of stones here mentioned is the pale of the druidical temple. He is here consulted as one who had a supernatural knowledge of things; from the druids, no doubt, came the ridiculous notion of the second sight, which prevailed in the highlands and isles.

Lovely art thou, said terrible Ullin, daughter of the generous Tuathal. I carry thee to Cairbar's halls. Three days I remain on Cromla, to wait that son of battle, Lamderg. On the fourth Gelchoffa is mine, if the mighty Lamderg flies.

I bid Allad! said the chief of Cromla, peace to thy dreams in the cave. Ferchios, sound the horn of Lamderg, that Ullin may hear on Cromla. Lamderg [7], like a roaring storm, ascended the hill from Selma. He hummed a furly song, as he went, like the noise of a falling stream. He stood like a cloud on the hill, that varies its form to the wind. He rolled a stone, the sign of war. Ullin heard in Cairbar's hall. The hero heard, with joy, his foe, and took his father's spear. A smile brightens his dark-brown cheek, as he places his sword by his side. The dagger glittered in his hand. He whistled as he went.

Gelchoffa saw the silent chief, as a wreath of mist ascending the hill, — She struck

H 3

her

[7] The reader will find this passage altered from what it was in the fragments of ancient poetry.

— It is delivered down very differently by tradition, and the translator has chosen that reading, which favours least of bombast.

her white and heaving breast; and silent, tearful, feared for Lamderg.

Cairbar, hoary chief of shells, said the maid of the tender hand; I must bend the bow on Cromla; for I see the dark brown hinds.

She halted up the hill. In vain! the gloomy heroes fought. — Why should I tell the king of Morven, how wrathful heroes fight! — Fierce Ullin fell. Young Lamderg came all pale to the daughter of generous Tuathal.

What blood, my love, the soft-haired woman said, what blood runs down my warrior's side? — It is Ullin's blood, the chief replied, thou fairer than the snow of Cromla! Gelchoffa, let me rest here a little while. The mighty Lamderg died.

And sleepest thou so soon on earth, o chief of shady Cromla? three days she mourned beside her love. — The hunters found her dead. They raised this tomb above the three. Thy son, o king of Morven, may rest here with heroes.

And here my son shall rest, said Fingal, the noise of their fame has reached my ears. Fillan and Fergus! bring hither Orla, the pale youth

youth of the stream of Loda. Not unequalled shall Ryno lie in earth, when Orla is by his side. Weep, ye daughters of Morven; and ye maids of the streamy Loda. Like a tree they grew on the hills; and they have fallen like the oak [8] of the desert; when it lies across a stream, and withers in the wind of the mountain.

Oscar! chief of every youth! thou seest how they have fallen. Be thou, like them, on earth renowned. Like them the song of bards. Terrible were their forms in battle; but calm was Ryno in the days of peace. He was like the bow of the shower, seen far distant on the stream; when the sun is setting on Mora, and silence on the hill of deer. Rest, youngest of my sons, rest, o Ryno, on Lena. We too shall be no more; for the warrior one day must fall.

Such was thy grief, thou king of hills, when Ryno lay on earth. What must the grief

[8] — ὡς ὅτε τις δρῦς ἤριπεν — HOM. II. 16.

—— as the mountain oak

Nods to the ax, till with a groaning sound

It sinks, and spreads its honours on the ground

H 4

POPE.

grief of Ossian be, for thou thyself art gone,
I hear not thy distant voice on Cona: My
eyes perceive thee not. Often forlorn and dark
I sit at thy tomb; and feel it with my hands,
When I think I hear thy voice; it is but the
blast of the desert. — Fingal has long since
fallen asleep, the ruler of the war.

Then Gaul and Ossian sat with Swaran on
the soft green banks of Lubar. I touched the
harp to please the king. But gloomy was
his brow. He rolled his red eyes towards Le-
na. The hero mourned his people.

I lifted my eyes to Cromla, and I saw
the son of generous Semo. — Sad and slow
he retired from his hill towards the lonely ca-
ve of Tura. He saw Fingal victorious, and
mixed his joy with grief. The sun is bright
on his armour, and Connal slowly followed.
They sunk behind the hill, like two pillars of
the fire of night; when winds pursue them
over the mountain, and the flaming heath re-
sounds. Beside a stream of roaring foam his
cave is in a rock. One tree bends above it;
and the rushing winds echo against its sides.
Here rests the chief of Dunscaich, the son of
generous Semo. His thoughts are on the batt-
le

le he left; and the tear is on his cheek. He mourned the departure of his fame, that fled like the mist of Cona. O Bragela, thou art too far remote to cheer the soul of the hero. But let him see thy bright form in his soul; that his thoughts may return to the lonely sun-beam of Dunscaich.

Who comes with the locks of age? It is the son of songs. Hail, Carril of other times, thy voice is like the harp in the halls of Tura. Thy words are pleasant, as the shower that falls on the fields of the sun. Carril of the times of old, why comest thou from the son of the generous Semo?

Ossian king of swords, replied the bard, thou best raigest the song. Long hast thou been known to Carril, thou ruler of battles. Often have I touched the harp to lovely Evirallin. Thou too hast often accompanied my voice in Branno's hall of generous shells. And often, amidst our voices, was heard the mildest Evirallin. One day she sung of Cormac's fall, the youth that died for her love. I saw the tears on her cheek, and on thine, thou chief of men. Her soul was touched for the unhappy, though

she loved him not. How fair among a thousand maids was the daughter of the generous Branno!

Bring not, Carril, I replied, bring not her memory to my mind. My soul must melt at the remembrance. My eyes must have their tears. Pale in the earth is she, the softly-blushing fair of my love. But sit thou on the heath, o Bard, and let us hear thy voice. It is pleasant, as the gale of spring, that sighs on the hunter's ear; when he wakens from dreams of joy, and has heard the music of the spirits of the hill.

FINGAL,

ARGUMENT TO BOOK VI.

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT to Book VI.

Night comes on. Fingal gives a feast to his army, at which Swaran is present. The king commands Ullin his bard, to give the song of peace; a custom always observed at the end of a war. Ullin relates the actions of Tremmor, great grandfather to Fingal, in Scandinavia, and his marriage with Inibaca, the daughter of a king of Lochlin, who was ancestor to Swaran; which consideration, together with his being brother to Agandecca, with whom Fingal was in love in his youth, induced the king to release him, and permit him to return, with the remains of his army, into Lochlin, upon his promise of never returning to Ireland, in a hostile manner. The night is spent in settling Swaran's departure, in songs of bards, and in a conversation, in which the story of Grumal is introduced by Fingal. Morning comes. Swaran departs; Fingal goes on a hunting party, and finding Cuchullin in the cave of Tura, comforts him, and sets sail, the next day, for Scotland; which concludes the poem.

FIN.

(125)

FINGAL,

AN ANCIENT

EPIC POEM

IN SIX BOOKS.

BOOK VI. (1)

The clouds of night come rolling down, and
rest on Cromla's dark-brown steep. The
stars of the north arise over the rolling of the
waves of Ullin; they shew their heads of fire
through the flying mist of heaven. A distant
wind roars in the wood; but silent and dark is
the plain of death.

Still on the darkening Lena arose in my
ears the tuneful voice of Carril. He sung of
the

[1] This book opens with the fourth night, and
ends on the morning of the sixth day. The time
of five days, five nights, and a part of the sixth
day is taken up in the poem. The scene lies in
the heath of Lena, and the mountain Cromla on
the coast of Ulster.

the companions of our youth, and the days of former years; when we met on the banks of Lego, and sent round the joy of the shell. Cromla, with its cloudy steeps, answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung, came in their rustling blasts. They were seen to bend with joy towards the sound of their praise.

Be thy soul blest, o Carril, in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou would come to my hall, when I am alone by night! — And thou dost come, my friend, I hear often thy light hand on my harp; when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends? But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast; and thy wind whistles through the gray hair of Ossian.

Now on the side of Mora the heroes gathered to the feast. A thousand aged oaks are burning to the wind. — The strength [2] of

[2] By the strength of the shell is meant the liquor the heroes drunk: of what kind it was, cannot be ascertained at this distance of time. The translator has met with several ancient poems, that mention wax-lights and wine as common in the halls

of the shells goes round. And the souls of warriors brighten with joy. But the king of Lochlin is silent, and sorrow reddens in the eyes of his pride. He often turned toward Lena, and remembered that he fell.

Fingal leaned on the shield of his fathers. His gray locks slowly waved on the wind, and glittered to the beam of night. He saw the grief of Swaran, and spoke to the first of Bards.

Raise, Ullin, raise the song of peace, and soothe my soul after battle, that my ear may forget the noise of arms. And let a hundred harps be near, to gladden the king of Lochlin. He must depart from us with joy. — None ever went sad from Fingal. Oscar! the lightning of my sword is against the strong in battle: but peaceful it lies by my side, when warriors yield in war.

Tren-

halls of Fingal. The names of both are borrowed from the Latin, which plainly shews, that our ancestors had them from the Romans, if they had them at all. The Caledonians in their frequent incursions to the province, might become acquainted with those conveniencies of life, and introduce them into their own country, among the booty which they carried from South Britain.

Trenmor [3], said the mouth of the songs, lived in the days of other years. He bounded over the waves of the north: companion of the storm. The high rocks of the land of Lochlin, and its groves of murmuring sounds appeared to the hero through the mist; — he bound his white-bosomed sails. — Trenmor pursued the boar, that roared along the woods of Gormal. Many had fled from its presence; but the spear of Trenmor slew it.

Three chiefs, that beheld the deed, told of the mighty stranger. They told, that he stood like a pillar of fire in the bright arms of his valour. The king of Lochlin prepared the feast, and called the blooming Trenmor. Three days he feasted at Gormal's windy towers; and got his choice in the combat.

The land of Lochlin had no hero, that yielded not to Trenmor. The shell of joy went round with songs in praise of the king of Morven; he that came over the waves, the first of mighty men.

Now when the fourth gray morn arose, the hero launched his ship; and walking along the

[3] Trenmor was great grandfather to Fingal. The story is introduced, to facilitate the dismissal of Swaran.

the silent shore waited for the rushing wind.
For loud and distant he heard the blast mur-
muring in the grove,

Covered over with arms of steel, a son of
the woody Gormal appeared. Red was his cheek
and fair his hair. His skin like the snow of
Morven. Mild rolled his blue and smiling eye,
when he spoke to the king of swords.

Stay, Trenmor, stay thou first of men,
thou hast not conquered Lonval's son. My
sword has often met the brave. And the wise
shun the strength of my bow.

Thou fair-haired youth, Trenmor replied,
I will not fight with Lonval's son. Thine arm
is feeble, sun-beam of beauty. Retire to Gor-
mal's dark-brown hinds.

But I will retire, replied the youth, with
the sword of Trenmor; and exult in the sound
of my fame. The virgins shall gather with
smiles around him who conquered Trenmor.
They shall sigh with the sighs of love, and
admire the length of thy spear; when I shall
carry it among thousands, and lift the glitter-
ing point to the sun.

I

Thou

Thou shalt never carry my spear, said the angry king of Morven. — Thy mother shall find thee pale on the shore of the echoing Gormal; and, looking over the dark-blue deep, see the sails of him that slew her son.

I will not lift the spear, replied the youth, my arm is not strong with years. But with the feathered dart I have learned to pierce a distant foe. Throw down that heavy mail of steel; for Trenmor is covered all over. — I first will lay my mail on earth. — Throw now thy dart, thou king of Morven.

He saw the moving of her breast. It was the sister of the king. — She had seen him in the halls of Gormal; and loved his face of youth. — The spear dropt from the hand of Trenmor: he bent his red cheek to the ground, for he had seen her like a beam of light, that meets the sons of the cave, when they revisit the fields of the sun, and bend their aching eyes.

Chief of the windy Morven, begun the maid of the arms of snow; let me rest in thy bounding ship, far from the love of Corlo.

For

For he, like the thunder of the desert, is terrible to Inibaca. He loves me in the gloom of his pride, and shakes ten thousand spears.

Rest thou in peace, said the mighty Trenmor, behind the shield of my fathers. I will not fly from the chief, though he shakes ten thousand spears.

Three days he waited on the shore; and sent his horn abroad. He called Corlo to battle, from all his echoing hills. But Corlo came not to battle. The king of Lochlin descended. He feasted on the roaring shore; and gave the maid to Trenmor.

King of Lochlin, said Fingal, thy blood flows in the veins of thy foe. Our families met in battle, because they loved the strife of spears. But often did they feast in the hall, and send round the joy of the shell. — Let thy face brighten with gladness, and thine ear delight in the harp. Dreadful as the storm of thine ocean, thou hast poured thy valour forth; thy voice has been like the voice of thousands, when they engage in battle. Raise, to-morrow, thy white sails to the wind, thou brother of Agandecca, Bright as the beam of noon she

comes on my mournful soul. I saw thy tears for the fair one, and spared thee in the halls of Starno; when my sword was red with slaughter, and my eye full of tears for the maid. — Or dost thou chuse the fight? The combat, which thy fathers gave to Tremor, is thine: that thou mayest depart renowned like the sun setting in the west.

King of the race of Morven, said the chief of the waves of Lochlin, never will Swaran fight thee, first of a thousand heroes! I saw thee in the halls of Starno, and few were thy years beyond my own. — When shall I, said I to my soul, lift the spear like the noble Fingal? We have fought heretofore, o warrior, on the side of the shaggy Malmor; after my waves had carried me to thy halls, and the feast of a thousand shells was spread. Let the bards send him, who overcame, to future years, for noble was the strife of heathy Malmor.

But many of the ships of Lochlin have lost their youths on Lena. Take these, thou king of Morven, and be the friend of Swaran. And when thy sons shall come to the mossy towers of Gormal, the feast of shells shall be spread, and the combat offered on the vale.

Nor

Nor ship, replied the king, shall Fingal take, nor land of many hills. The desert is enough to me, with all its deer and woods. Rise on thy waves again, thou noble friend of Agandecca. Spread thy white sails to the beam of the morning, and return to the echoing hills of Gormal.

Blest be thy soul, thou king of shells, said Swaran of the dark-brown shield. In peace thou art the gale of spring. In war the mountain-storm. Take now my hand in friendship, thou noble king of Morven. Let thy bards mourn those who fell. Let Erin give the sons of Lochlin to earth, and raise the mossy stones of their fame. That the children of the north hereafter may behold the place where their fathers fought. And some hunter may say, when he leans on a mossy tomb, here Fingal and Swaran fought, the heroes of other years. Thus hereafter shall he say, and our fame shall last for ever.

Swaran, said the king of the hills, to-day our fame is greatest. We shall pass away like a dream. No sound will be in the fields of our battles. Our tombs will be lost in the

heath. The hunter shall not know the place of our rest. Our names may be heard in song, but the strength of our arms will cease. O Ossian, Carril, and Ullin, you know of heroes that are no more. Give us the song of other years. Let the night pass away on the sound, and morning return with joy.

We gave the song to the kings, and a hundred harps accompanied our voice. The face of Swaran brightened like the full moon of heaven, when the clouds vanish away, and leave her calm and broad in the midst of the sky.

It was then that Fingal spoke to Carril the chief of other times. Where is the son of Semo; the king of the isle of mist? has he retired, like the meteor of death, to the dreary cave of Tura?

Cuchullin, said Carril of other times, lies in the dreary cave of Tura. His hand is on the sword of his strength. His thoughts on the battle which he lost. Mournful is the king of spears; for he has often been victorious. He sends the sword of his war to rest on the side of Fingal. For, like the storm of the desert, thou hast scattered all his foes. Take,

O Fingal, the sword of the hero; for his fame is departed like mist, when it flies before the rustling wind of the vale.

No: replied the king, Fingal shall never take his sword. His arm is mighty in war; and tell him, his fame shall never fail. Many have been overcome in battle, that have shone afterwards like the sun of heaven.

O Swaran, king of the resounding woods, give all thy grief away. — The vanquished, if brave, are renowned; they are like the sun in a cloud, when he hides his face in the south, but looks again on the hills of grass.

Grumal was a chief of Cona. He fought the battle on every coast. His soul rejoiced in blood; his ear in the din of arms. He poured his warriors on the sounding Craca; and Craca's king met him from his grove; for then within the circle of Brumo [*] he spoke to the stone of power.

Fierce

[*] This passage alludes to the religion of the king of Craca. See a note on a similar subject in the third book, p. 59.

Fierce was the battle of the heroes; for the maid of the breast of snow. The fame of the daughter of Craca had reached Grumal at the streams of Cona; he vowed to have the white-bosomed maid, or die on the echoing Craca. Three days they strove together, and Grumal on the fourth was bound.

Far from his friends they placed him in the horrid circle of Brumo; where often, they said, the ghosts of the dead howled round the stone of their fear. But afterwards he shone like a pillar of the light of heaven. They fell by his mighty hand, and Grumal had his fame.

Raise, ye bards of other times, raise high the praise of heroes; that my soul may settle on their fame; and the mind of Swaran cease to be sad.

They lay in the heath of Mora; the dark winds rustled over the heroes. — A hundred voices at once arose, a hundred harps were strung; they sung of other times, and the mighty chiefs of former years.

When now shall I hear the bard; or rejoice at the fame of my fathers? The harp is not strung

strung on Morven; nor the voice of music raised on Cona. Dead with the mighty is the bard; and fame is in the desert no more.

Morning trembles with the beam of the east, and glimmers on gray-headed Cromla. Over Lena is heard the horn of Swaran, and the sons of the ocean gather around. — Silent and sad they mount the wave, and the blast of Ullin is behind their sails. White, as the mist of Morven, they float along the sea.

Call, said Fingal, call my dogs, the long-bounding sons of the chace. Call white-breasted Bran; and the surly strength of Luath. — Fillan, and Ryno — but he is not here; my son rests on the bed of death. Fillan and Fergus, blow my horn, that the joy of the chace may arise; that the deer of Cromla may hear and start at the lake of roes.

The shrill sound spreads along the wood. The sons of heathy Cromla arise. — A thousand dogs fly off at once, gray-bounding through the heath. A deer fell by every dog, and three by the white-breasted Bran. He brought them,

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in their flight, to Fingal, that the joy of the king might be great.

One deer fell at the tomb of Ryno; and the grief of Fingal returned. He saw how peaceful lay the stone of him who was the first at the chase. — No more shalt thou rise, o my son, to partake of the feast of Cromla. Soon will thy tomb be hid, and the grass grow rank on thy grave. The sons of the feeble shall pass over it, and not know that the mighty lie there.

Ossian and Fillan, sons of my strength, and Gaul king of the blue swords of war, let us ascend the hill to the cave of Tura, and find the chief of the battles of Erin. — Are these the walls of Tura? gray and lonely they rise on the heath. The king of shells is sad, and the halls are desolate. Come let us find the king of swords, and give him all our joy. — But is that Cuchullin, o Fillan, or a pillar of smoke on the heath? The wind of Cromla is on my eyes, and I distinguish not my friend.

Fingal! replied the youth, it is the son of Semo. Gloomy and sad is the hero; his hand

is

is on his sword. Hail to the son of battle,
breaker of the shields!

Hail to thee, replied Cuchullin, hail to all
the sons of Morven. Delightful is thy presence,
o Fingal, it is like the sun on Cromla; when
the hunter mourns his absence for a season,
and sees him between the clouds. Thy sons
are like stars, that attend thy course, and give
light in the night. It is not thus thou hast
seen me, o Fingal, returning from the wars
of the desert; when the kings of the world [*]
had fled, and joy returned to the hill of hinds.

Many are thy words, Cuchullin, said Con-
nan [†] of small renown. Thy words are ma-
ny,

[*] This is the only passage in the poem, wherein
the wars of Fingal against the Romans are al-
luded to. — The Roman emperor is distin-
guished in old compositions by the title of *king
of the world*.

[†] Connan was of the family of Morni. He is men-
tioned in several other poems, and always ap-
pears with the same character. The poet passed
him over in silence till now, and his behaviour
here deserves no better usage.

ny, son of Semo: but where are thy deeds in arms? Why did we come over the ocean, to aid thy feeble sword? Thou flyest to thy cave of sorrow, and Connan fights thy battles: Refign to me these arms of light; yield them, thou son of Erin.

No hero, replied the chief, ever fought the arms of Cuchullin; and had a thousand heroes fought them, it were in vain, thou gloomy youth. I fled not to the cave of sorrow, as long as Erin's warriors lived.

Youth of the feeble arm, said Fingal, Connan say no more. Cuchullin is renowned in battle, and terrible over the desert. Often have I heard thy fame, thou stormy chief of Innisfail. Spread now thy white sails for the isle of mist, and see Bragela leaning on her rock. Her tender eye is in tears, and the winds lift her long hair from her heaving breast. She listens to the winds of night, to hear the voice of thy rowers [*]; to hear the song of the sea, and the sound of thy distant harp.

And

[*] The practice of singing when they row, is universal among the inhabitants of the north-west coast of Scotland and the isles. It deceives time, and inspirits the rowers.

And long shall she listen in vain; Cuchullin shall never return. How can I behold Braggela to raise the sigh of her breast? Fingal, I was always victorious in the battles of other spears!

And hereafter thou shalt be victorious, said Fingal king of shells. The fame of Cuchullin shall grow like the branchy tree of Cromla. Many battles await thee, o chief, and many shall be the wounds of thy hand. Bring hither, Oscar, the deer, and prepare the feast of shells? that our souls may rejoice after danger, and our friends delight in our presence.

We sat, we feasted, and we sung. The soul of Cuchullin rose. The strength of his arm returned; and gladness brightened on his face. Ullin gave the song, and Carril raised the voice. I, often, joined the bards, and sung of battles of the spear. — Battles! where I often fought; but now I fight no more. The fame of my former actions is ceased; and I sit forlorn at the tombs of my friends.

Thus they passed the night in the song; and brought back the morning with joy. Fingal

gal arose on the heath, and shook his glittering spear in his hand. — He moved first toward the plains of Lena, and we followed like a ridge of fire. Spread the sail, said the king of Morven, and catch the winds that pour from Lena. — We rose on the wave with songs, and rushed, with joy, through the foam of the ocean [*].

[*] It is allowed by the best Critics, that an epic poem ought to end happily. This rule, in its most material circumstances, is observed by the three most deservedly celebrated poets, Homer, Virgil, and Milton; yet, I know not how it happens, the conclusions of their poems throw a melancholy damp on the mind. One leaves his reader at a funeral; another at the untimely death of a hero; and the third in the solitary scenes of an unpeopled world.

Ως οἱ γ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἑκτορος ἱππο-
δαμοιο. HOMER.

Such honours Ilion to her hero paid,
And peaceful slept the mighty Hector's shade.
POPE.

—— Ferrum adverso sub pectore condit
Fervidus. Ast illi solvuntur frigore membra,
Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras.
VIRGIL.

He

He rais'd his arm aloft; and at the word
Deep in his bosom drove the shining sword.
The streaming blood distain'd his arms around,
And the disdainful soul came rushing thro' the
wound.

DRYDEN.

They, hand in hand, with wand'ring steps and
flow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

MILTON.

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